■ Business / B8

How to make RP globally competitive

■World / A10

Bin Laden cornered in Pakistan?

■News / A3

Twins 90% surgically separated

■ Entertainment/ C1

What makes ultimate 'baduy' a classy lady

■ InfoTech/ B16

Kris-Joey drama boosts Inq7 traffic

Who's facing whom in presidential debate?

KAILANGAN SERYOSO!
SALI AKO!

By Juliet L. Javellana and N. Bordadora

LET'S GET this straight.

Malacañang yesterday urged actor Fernando Poe Jr. to face Presi-

WHO'S FACING/ A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tanong ng Bayan

Edsa I: Grasya o Disgrasya?

A. Grasya: Naibalik ang demokrasya.
B. Disgrasya: Wala tayong napala kundi pulitika, kudeta, atbp.
C. Di ko alam: Ano ba ang nangyari?
D. Wala akong pakialam: Malayo sa sikmura ko ang isyu.

Text INQTV <letra ng inyong sagot> sa 2915 at abangan ang sagot ng bayan mamayang alas-10 ng gabi, sa INQTV on ABC-5.

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Monday, February 23, 2004 ★★ 68 pages / 6 sections / vol. 19 / no. 77 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Bro. Eddie musters big force at Luneta

Evangelist says he is no pushover

By Blanche S. Rivera

IT WAS the biggest political rally so far in this election season.

Tens of thousands gathered at Rizal Park in Manila for the proclamation rally of Bangon Pilipinas standard-bearer evangelist Eddie Villanueva, organizers claimed.

As of 6:30 last night, radio reports said the Western Police District estimated the crowd at 2.8 million. The turnout indicated that Villanueva was a force to reckon with in the presidential race.

Villanueva said the turnout disproved the propaganda being peddled by his political rivals that he did not stand a chance in the May 10 elections.

"They want you to believe that we cannot win and this is a mere popularity contest. But this is not true. If one of you brings two or three more, then the May 10 election is over," he said in a speech that lasted more than an hour.

The preacher, who founded the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide, said that despite the political harassment he had experienced, people came to support him because they desperately wanted change.

He said some buses bound for the Luneta rally had been stopped on the highway while others canceled their contracts at the last minute due to pressure from his rivals.

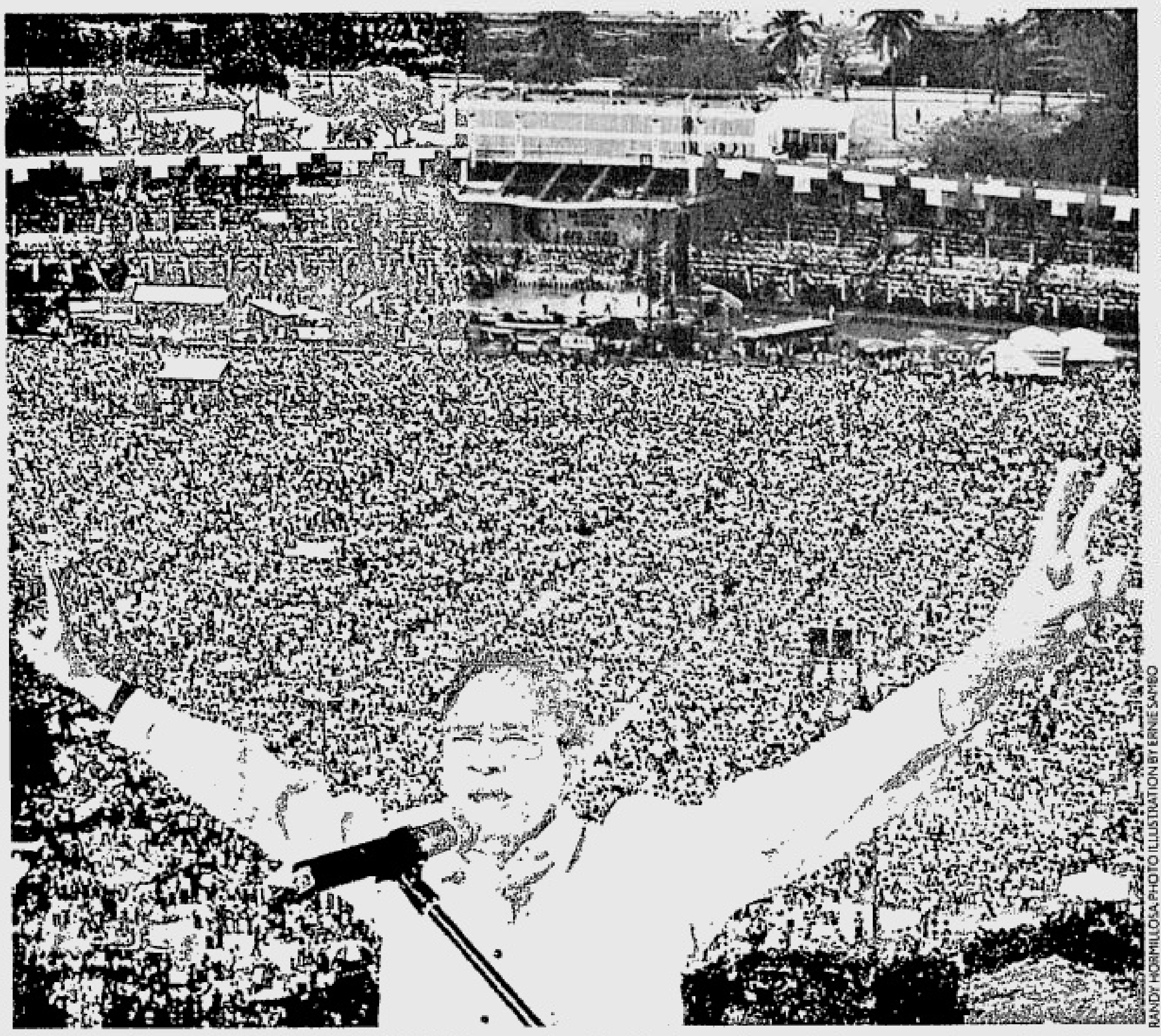
Villanueva also revealed that police and barangay workers in Pulilan, Bulacan, had apologized to him for tearing down his posters and streamers in the area when President Macapagal-Arroyo visited the province on Thursday.

"Is this democracy? Is this freedom?" Villanueva asked.

"Sometimes I am tired physically and mentally. I am hurt by the dirty tricks, but I am refreshed by people like you who love the country and who would not be bought."

Quoting retired Manila Archbishop

BRO. EDDIE/ A8



PRESIDENTIAL candidate and evangelist Eddie Villanueva (inset file photo) preaches against government corruption before tens of thousands of followers in Sunday's rally at the Luneta Grandstand. According to police, 2.8 million attended.

RANDY HORMILLOSA PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ERNIE SAMBO

Poe doubts own copy of birth certificate

By Christine O. Avendaño

TUGUEGARAO, Cagayan—Facing contempt charges if he refuses to submit his birth certificate and other documents to the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, actor Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday expressed doubts over the authenticity of a copy of his birth certificate that a government agency issued to him last year.

Poe, one of the two opposition presidential candidates, told reporters here that he wanted to find out whether his copy had been tampered with because of discrepancies in the entries.

But he did not specify what the discrepancies were, except that they did not involve any dates.

"*May pagkakaiba kaya gusto ko malaman [kung] paano nagawa yun* (There are discrepancies. That's why I want to know how these happened)," said Poe, in reference to the birth certificate now in his possession. "*Mabuti na yun nakakasiguro ako* (It's better to be sure)."

Poe told reporters after he attended Sunday Mass at the Our Lady of Piat Basilica that he applied for a copy of his birth certificate at the Civil Registrar Office in Manila. He said he used the document to acquire a passport for a trip to the United States.

[The Department of Foreign Affairs requires anyone applying for a passport for the first time to submit a copy of his or her birth certificate. The document indicates the birth place and the names of the parents of a person—pieces of information that help the DFA ascertain the applicant's citizenship. In the case of Poe, he reportedly lost his old Philippine passport and

POE DOUBTS/ A22

Stalwarts of Edsa take different paths

By John Nery

LIKE A crooked finger, the twists and turns in the public careers of former Senators Orlando Mercado and Rene Saguisag point to a central puzzle in our history. How did anti-Marcos activists, together in Edsa I, find themselves on opposite sides in Edsa II?

Premieres Tonight
10 P.M., ABC-5

Mercado and Saguisag, two prominent members of the so-called parliament of the streets, have certainly gone down very different byways. Today, Mercado is running for the Senate again, on the administration ticket, while Saguisag remains identified as opposition leader Joseph Estrada's highest-profile ex-lawyer.

How did this come to pass? In InqTV's premiere episode, which airs tonight on ABC-5, Mercado and Saguisag explain themselves.

Mercado was already active in street protests before martial law was declared, but like many his real political turning point was the assassination of Marcos rival Ninoy Aquino in 1983. On that day, he and many other "middle-aged" ex-activists, he says, were "*nabuhayan ng patay na ugat*" (literally, their dead veins pulsed with life again).

In 1984, he ran as an opposition can-

STALWARTS/ A20

Malice prevails over reason in Senate

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

FRANCISCO Nemenzo, the University of the Philippines president, has fired broadsides at the Senate after it pigeonholed on its Feb. 6 adjournment Senate Bill No. 2587 which sought to revise the UP Charter for the first time since its founding in 1908.

The bill sank into the black hole of the Senate after it was entangled in the web of the chamber's florentine politics—the graveyard of a number of key legislative initiatives and the springboard of gridlocks. The bill, which was never put to a vote, was scuttled by the sustained filibuster tactics of a single senator, John Osmeña, who has been running a feud with the university, particularly its president.

The shelving of the bill on the Senate's adjournment dashed all hopes of bringing the UP Charter into the 21st century and squandered the campaign of three UP presidents—Jose Abueva (under the

MALICE/ A19

EDSA I TIMELINE

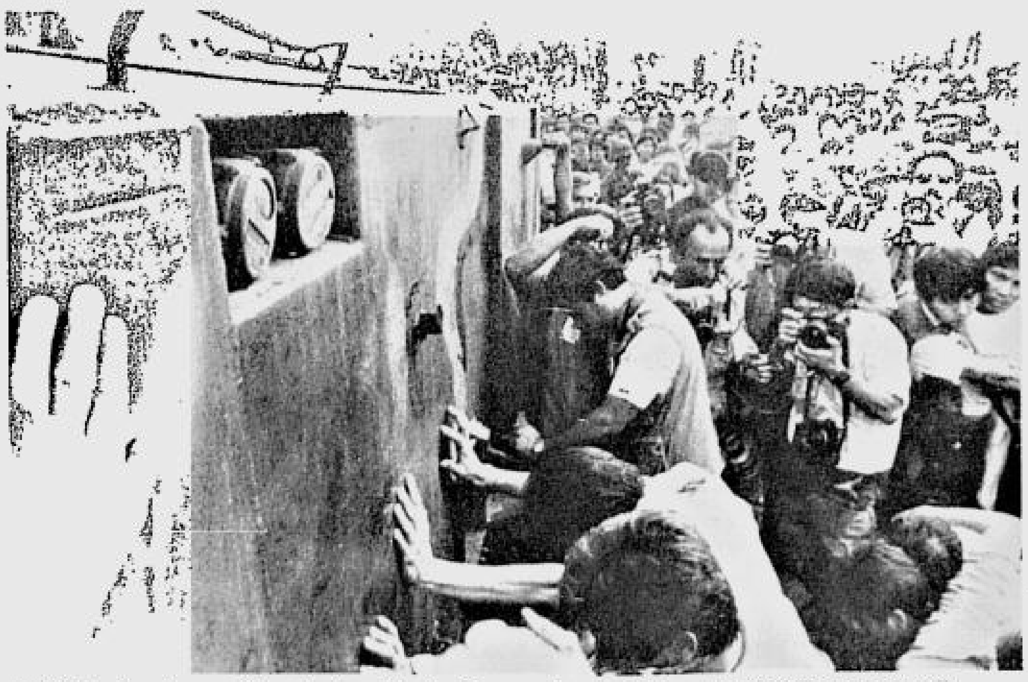
Day Two, Feb. 23, 1986

MORE than half of the Filipinos today, the 20-somethings and younger who number about 43 million, have no memory at all of the first Edsa People Power revolt that occurred between Feb. 22 and 25, 1986. Hence, this chronology, distilled from books and PDI archives, about what has been called the "real" Edsa.

By PDI Research

MIDNIGHT: Thousands heed Jaime Cardinal Sin's call over Radio Veritas to gather around Camps Aguinaldo and Crame and protect rebels led by Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, Armed Forces vice chief Gen. Fidel Ramos and the Reform the Armed Forces Movement.

DAY TWO/ A4



WARM bodies stop a military tank sent by the Marcos dictatorship to crush the "people power" uprising, then on its second day, on Edsa.

PDI PHOTO

MARCOS MILLIONS

Imelda makes new demands

By Arlyn de la Cruz
Contributor
Editor: Leah Makabenta

(Second of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

EDITOR'S NOTE: Every post-Marcos government, from Aquino to Estrada, had sought a compromise agreement with the heirs of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the belief that it would be the most speedy way to prise the fabled ill-gotten billions from the stranglehold of the Swiss gnomes guarding them.

That none of these deals ever prospered was—apart from the sincerity or cupidity of the governments involved—largely because of the bad faith of Imelda Marcos, according to one of the former First Lady's disenchanted "blind followers."

Cherry Cobarrubias, the head of the True Marcos Loyalists Headquarters who had a bitter falling-out with Imelda in October 2002, said Imelda never was interested in a settlement and was loath to give up even a small part of the Swiss bank deposits. This is her story.

JANUARY 1995 came but there was still no clear indication an agreement on how to withdraw the $356 million could be made.

According to Cherry Cobarrubias, any agreement was bound

IMELDA/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/02/23/04

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

PALACE DENIES MAKING OFFER TO NUR

'Votes for freedom' deal bared

By Jeffrey M. Tupas, *PDI Mindanao Bureau,* **and Juliet Labog-Javellana**

KIDAPAWAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo allegedly offered jailed former Moro National Liberation Front chair Nur Misuari his freedom in exchange for the influential Muslim leader's support in the May elections.

Ms Macapagal's political strategist, Norberto Gonzales, told a gathering in Marawi City on Saturday that Misuari had agreed to support the President in exchange for freedom.

Nashreen Pangadapun, a member of the Moro group Maradeka, said Gonzales distributed a letter dated Feb. 10 which was signed by both the President and Misuari.

Pangadapun described the letter as a "deal meant to get an outright hold of MNLF-Misuari faction votes."

Under the deal, Pangadapun said, Ms Macapagal offered Misuari his freedom and total support for the gubernatorial post in Sulu in exchange for his support.

But Malacañang yesterday denied the alleged deal with Misuari.

"Not true. The President cannot just decide to free him. Misuari is already charged, he is in detention and we have to respect due process and the law," said Mike Defensor, the President's campaign spokesperson.

"It would be presumptuous of them to say there is a deal," Defensor said.

He said that if Misuari had expressed support for the President, it was because he saw that Ms Macapagal was very determined and aggressive in seeking peace for Mindanao.

He said that if Misuari obtained bail, it would still be part of due process and not because of some deal with the President.

Misuari is being held on rebellion charges after his followers went on a murderous rampage in Jolo, Sulu in 2000.

Defensor said Misuari still has some influence with the MNLF, which signed a peace agreement with the government in 1996.

According to Pangadapun, prior to the signing of the alleged deal on Feb. 10, Gonzales, accompanied by Speaker Jose de Venecia, paid Misuari a visit at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, where the former MNLF chair is detained.

Gonzales arrived at the gathering of around 1,000 MNLF members at 2:45 p.m. on Saturday and spoke to the crowd for 50 minutes.

"He just pointed out that the President was able to convince the chairman to give her his support," Pangadapun said.

At 3 p.m., Misuari also addressed the crowd via phone patch from Laguna.

"He sounded very alive. He is still the same Misuari who sounded very 'combative.' He is still the old chairman Misuari who talks full of rhetoric like 'let us give peace a chance,'" Pangadapun said.

"His tone? *Parang pabayaan na siya . . . hayaan na siya* (Like allow him to . . . let him) pursue what had been agreed upon in the political deal he made with the government," he said.

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia and presidential adviser on national security Norberto Gonzales (right) flank Misuari during their recent meeting.

RP backs world pact vs pollutants

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Toxic waste victims hailed the Senate approval of a resolution banning and eliminating persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the country.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., chair of the foreign relations committee, sponsored the Philippine ratification of the Stockholm Convention through Senate Resolution 106 which was approved on Feb. 2.

Braulio Pabillare Jr., president of the toxic waste victims group Yakap, said the Senate action will speed up the identification of contaminated sites in two former American military bases in the Philippines.

Pabillare said Yakap hoped the government would help eliminate POPs in the environs of the former Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base. These include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from electric transformers, dioxin from the burning of weapons and pesticides like aldrin, and dieldrin and chlordane used in golf courses and houses.

Also on the list, said Pabillare, a former base worker, was Agent Orange, a defoliant used in the Vietnam War. This was stored in and transported through Subic in Zambales, he added.

At least 49 of the 151 country-signatories have ratified the treaty reached in Sweden in May 2001. The convention needs the acquiescence of 50 countries before it is enforced worldwide.

The treaty is considered a "milestone in global efforts to protect the environment and to achieve sustainable development," according to the People's Task Force for Bases Cleanup.

PTFBC leaders said former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez, who signed the treaty on behalf of the government, had supported the ratification campaign by non-government organizations in the last two years.

The pact sought a global ban initially on 12 harmful chemicals, among them the pesticide DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane). *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

GMA is Lola Glo anew

CABANATUAN CITY—Ate Glo became Lola Glo for the second time on Friday with the birth of a baby girl to youngest son Dato and his wife Kakai.

Announcing the happy news during a dialogue with local residents at the Nueva Ecija High School here, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the baby will be named Eva Arroyo "after my mother," the former first lady Eva Macaraeg-Macapagal.

Ms Macapagal's first grandchild, Mikaela Gloria, was born to older son Juan Miguel and his wife Angela Montenegro on Nov. 5, 2002.

When asked how she wanted her grandchildren to be brought up, Ms Macapagal's answer was swift and sure: "Prayerful. I'd like them to be always asking God what He wants them to do."

Asked if she ever rested, the President said it was the reason she changed her day-off from Sunday to Monday, upon the suggestion of her advisers. "I was told that many people did not work on Sunday, and I shouldn't miss my chance to reach them," she explained. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Separation of conjoined twins 90% complete

By Rita Villadiego
Contributor

NEW YORK—After undergoing the riskiest part of their brain operation series, 22-month-old Filipino conjoined twins Clarence and Carl Aguirre are now 90 percent surgically separated after surgeons successfully untangled numerous blood vessels on Friday.

"We are delighted that Clarence and Carl did beautifully. It went very smoothly for such a complex procedure," Dr. Steven Safyer, chief medical officer of the New York Montefiore Medical Center announced at a press conference Saturday.

Dr. James Goodrich, director of pediatric neurosurgery of Montefiore, described the latest operation as "tedious, treacherous and tenacious," as they struggled to separate a large complex of veins.

"However, even though we have worked around almost 90 percent of the skull to date, with only two to three inches remaining, the road ahead remains risky," Dr. Goodrich said.

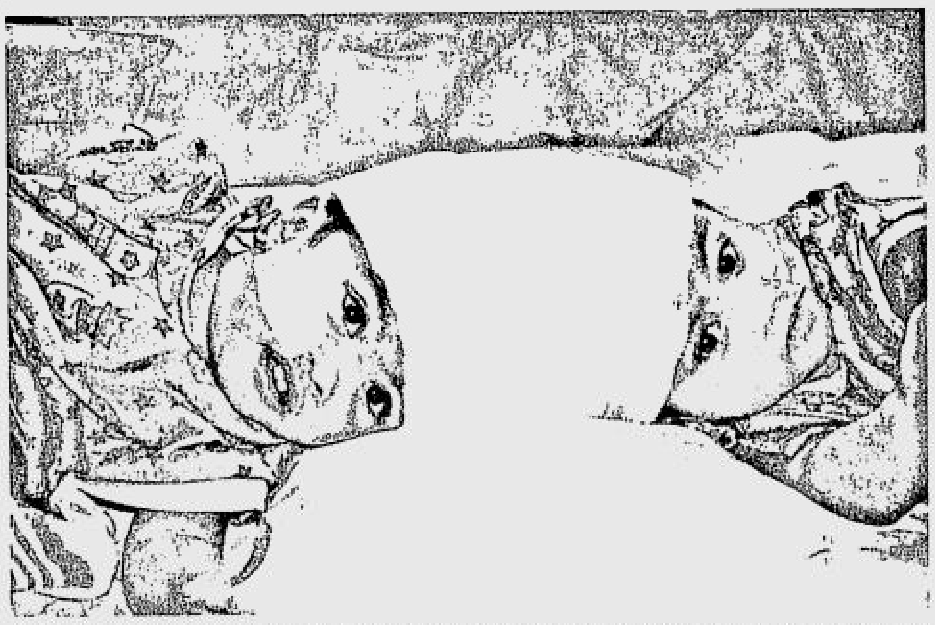
The latest operation, the third in a series, was very challenging because of the abnormal veins creating a "tributary lake" or complicated branches of veins, said Dr. Goodrich.

He noted that the most difficult part of the third surgery involved elevating the bone flap in the boys' skulls to create a window through which the highly complex surgery on the tangled veins could be performed.

According to him, the children could have bled to death if they didn't cautiously elevate the bone flap.

With the help of the hospital's high-tech equipment and three-dimensional holograms, a 16-person medical team opened the skulls and separated the remaining blood vessels of the twins in a five-hour operation.

During the complicated operation, surgeons tied off at least one of two major veins the twins still shared, as well as a number of smaller veins. But the surgeons still need to tie off one major vein at the back of the boys' head.



CLARENCE, left, and Carl Aguirre are shown before their latest operation which put them on course for total separation later this year.

AP

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Imelda makes new demands

From page A1

to fail because Imelda Marcos did not really want it to push through.

"She changed her mind from one moment to the next, she wanted more," Cobarrubias said.

At about this time, Imelda was growing impatient with Bernard de Preux, Ferdinand Marcos' Swiss lawyer, and decided to change lawyers, hiring Patrick Foetisch.

But in truth, it was Imelda who was causing the delay, said Cobarrubias.

The lawyers said an authorization letter from Imelda was essential to withdraw the $386 million.

It turned out that before she would agree to give the authorization, Imelda wanted the jewelry and paintings that had been confiscated returned to her.

Cobarrubias said she told Imelda the Ramos administration might well feel that she was not really serious about a compromise settlement with this new demand.

But Imelda told her to talk to Gunigundo. "You are very persuasive, Cherry, I need the jewelry," she quoted Imelda as saying.

New demands

Accordingly, retired Brig. Gen. Galileo Kintanar drew up a memorandum for President Ramos outlining the new demands.

The points covered in that memorandum are discussed in a Jan. 24, 1995 letter from Kintanar to Gunigundo, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

It asked for, among other things, the "immediate return of the other belongings such as clothing, other jewelry, other paintings, family and foundation homes here and abroad, especially those assigned to the Marcos children."

It also said that "the sharing in the other sequestered assets, especially local assets, will be pursued in accordance with another supplemental compromise agreement" between Gunigundo and Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. in July 1994.

A letter-agreement between Bongbong and Gunigundo dated July 1994 was one of the documents that Cobarrubias provided the INQUIRER.

The Kintanar letter quoted a provision in the Bongbong-Gunigundo agreement as saying that the 75-25 percent sharing of local assets covered in the compromise agreement would be used as a "starting sharing arrangement" and that "the percentage would be upwardly adjusted in favor of the Marcos family based on their contribution to the joint recovery efforts."

Gunigundo is seen to have signed the letter but only as acknowledging receipt and noting it.

It was not until two months after the supposed agreement was signed that Imelda finally issued an authorization letter dated March 9, 1995 authorizing and empowering her lawyer Foetisch to "withdraw all the opposition that was filed for and in behalf of all our foundations during the past years, against the request of transfer filed with Swiss authorities by the Republic of the Philippines represented by the Presidential Commission on Good Government, its present chair, Magtanggol C. Gunigundo and his predecessors, and to authorize the transfer of all accounts and assets by the banks, by the family foundations, and by all others, in favor of said PCGG."

According to Cobarrubias, this document belies claims by the Marcoses that the money does not belong to them but to "entities representing the foundations" as stated in their pleadings before the Supreme Court opposing the high court ruling forfeiting the $683 million escrow deposits.

Foetisch himself was in the Philippines last year to oppose the Supreme Court ruling, declaring himself to be representing the true owners of the Swiss deposits but not naming any of the Marcoses as the "entities and principals he [was] representing."

Secret talks

In an INQUIRER report on April 25, 1995, Gunigundo admitted to having conducted secret talks with the Marcoses to withdraw the $386 million Swiss deposits.

But he said that nothing came of the negotiations as "there was no meeting of minds and the proposals from both parties did not result in any agreement."

He also said that the talks bogged down after the PCGG sold a Dasmariñas property which Imelda said belonged to her children. He said Imelda became angry and that precipitated the stalemate.

In November 1996, Cobarrubias said Imelda instructed her to convince Gunigundo to revise the "meat of the [December 1993] agreement."

She wanted the family's 25-percent share to be raised to 30 percent.

"I told her I was too embarrassed to do it, she should just ask someone else to do it for her," said Cobarrubias.

Cobarrubias said she could sense the Ramos administration was beginning to have doubts that Imelda was sincere about concluding a compromise settlement. After all, it took her almost two years from the time the compromise agreement was signed to issue the authorization letter to her lawyers.

Cobarrubias said many times Gunigundo asked her: "What more does Mrs. Marcos want?"

The government's Swiss lawyers were also pressing Cobarrubias to convince both parties, especially Imelda, to "drop trivial desires" so that the settlement could push through.

In a letter to Cobarrubias dated March 5, 1995, the government's Swiss lawyer Sergio Salvioni said: "I can confirm that we are running against time. Any more delay in the implementation could be very dangerous and could frustrate our steps."

Cobarrubias said she showed Salvoni's letter to Imelda and a few days after, on March 9, she gave the authorization letter for Foetisch.

It was at this point, said Cobarrubias, that it struck her that Imelda never really wanted a settlement and was not about to give up the money in the Swiss banks.

It was the Marcos children who wanted the compromise settlement, she said.

IMELDA/ A5

Day Two, Feb. 23, 1986

From page A1

Metropolitan Command head Maj. Gen. Prospero Olivas tells President Ferdinand Marcos he is incapable of dispersing crowd at Edsa. He also defies Marcos' order to call Army commander Maj. Gen. Josephus Ramas for reinforcements.

1 a.m.: Marcos presents on Channel 4 alleged assassin Maj. Saulito Aromin.

1:45 a.m.: Supreme Court Justice Nestor Alampay resigns.

3 a.m.: AFP chief Fabian Ver gathers his men in Fort Bonifacio and appoints Ramas, his protégé, to lead assault on Aguinaldo and Crame.

Enrile urges Corazon Aquino to announce her government as duly elected President. Sin goes on air to ask Marcos and Ver not to use violence.

4 a.m.: In Washington, US Secretary of State George Shultz assembles a few of his men, including former Ambassador to the Philippines Michael Armacost, to come up with a firm policy vis-à-vis the Philippines.

5:30 a.m.: Loyalist troops destroy Radio Veritas' transmitter in Bulacan, limiting its reach to Luzon.

Marine commander Gen. Artemio Tadiar is stunned to learn that Ramas, who has little combat experience, has been assigned to lead attack on rebels. Tadiar and his men are standing guard in Malacañang.

Aquino, still in Cebu, turns down Assemblyman Ramon Mitra's offer to bring her to Palawan, and decides to return to Manila.

Mass is celebrated inside Crame. Outside on Edsa, people continue to arrive, some on foot. Human barricades are further fortified.

8 a.m.: After waiting for three hours for permission to withdraw his troops from Palace, Tadiar shouts at Ramas: "This is insane! I am still waiting for permission to move troops, yet you are ready to move out!"

Marcos orders Col. Antonio Sotelo, commander of Air Force 15th Strike Wing based in Sangley Point, to disable helicopters in Crame. With no one volunteering to carry out attack, Sotelo discusses with his men plan to fight alongside rebels.

11 a.m.: Aquino holds brief press conference in Cebu, asking people to support rebels and calling on Marcos to step down.

Noon: People numbering 300,000 to 400,000 gather at Edsa, with a number carrying images of the Virgin Mary. The color yellow dominates landscape.

1:30 p.m.: Troops led by Metropolitan Police chief Alfredo Lim do nothing to disperse crowd. Earlier, Lim is ordered to conduct dispersal operation but he does not do so.

2:20 p.m.: Aquino arrives in Manila and proceeds to her sister's house in Greenhills, San Juan.

Enrile and Ramos decide to consolidate forces at Crame. Linking arms, the people at Edsa create a protective wall for Enrile and RAM troops as they cross over from Aguinaldo.

2:47 p.m.: Car with tinted windows bearing Aquino cruises alongside loyalist column of seven tanks and two Marine battalions led by Tadiar moving on Edsa.

3 p.m.: People at corner of Ortigas and Edsa form human barricades to block path of oncoming tanks. Tense stand-off begins.

4 p.m.: Enrile and Marcos talk by phone, with the latter offering absolute pardon. Enrile asks that tanks be stopped; Marcos says he cannot.

6:30 p.m.: Radio Veritas signs off after emergency transmitter bogs down.

In a news conference, Enrile announces his men's rejection of Marcos' offer of pardon. Ramos talks about "New Armed Forces."

7 p.m.: Papal Nuncio Bruno Torpigliani hands Marcos a letter from Pope John Paul II asking for peaceful resolution of crisis. White House issues a statement questioning "credibility and legitimacy" of Marcos government.

11:30 p.m.: June Keithley, who has been broadcasting at Radio Veritas since start of rebellion, moves to dzRJ facilities using Veritas' frequency of 840 to keep location a secret. Col. Ruben Ciron, one of Enrile's men, facilitates transfer of frequency.

Crowd thins as tanks retreat, but human barricades remain intact.

Officials who withdraw support from Marcos: Consul to Honolulu Raul Rabe, Lt. Noel Buan, Brigadier Generals Tomas Manlongat, Renato de Villa, Dionisio Tan-Gatue, Carlos Aguilar, Benjamin Ignacio and Rodrigo Gutang, police superintendents Narciso Cabrera, Ruben Escarcha, Alfredo Yson

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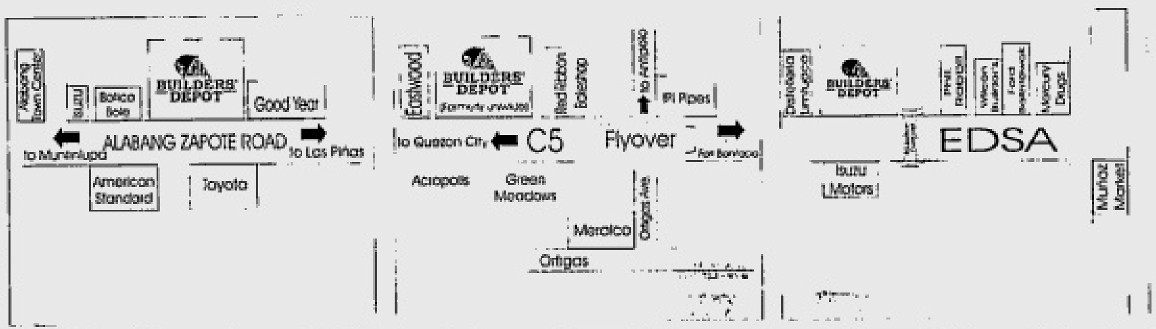

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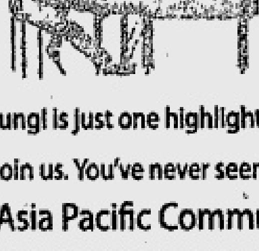

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PDI PHOTO

CHERRY Cobarrubias, of True Marcos Loyalist party-list group, shows documents presented during government negotiations with Swiss authorities to recover the Marcoses' alleged hidden wealth.

Imelda makes ...

From page A4

"Mrs. Marcos herself told me that she did not really want to sign the settlement because it was their [the family's] money but she was forced to do it because the children wanted it," said Cobarrubias.

Asked why the Marcos children would push for a settlement, Cobarrubias said it was probably for "practical reasons and for them to have peace of mind."

"Besides, the Marcos children knew that this is what their late father wanted," she said.

Cobarrubias said that during the Aquino administration when the Marcoses were living in exile in Hawaii, the late dictator wanted to settle with the government.

"He wanted only one condition, that he be allowed to return even if he was left with nothing but Cory did not agree. Every [Cory] government official who talked with the old man in Hawaii knows that," she said.

By agreeing to a compromise, the children were in a way honoring the will of their father, she said. *(Tomorrow: 'Suprme Court decision is true will of Marcos')*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 23, 2004
7th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Jas 3:13-18
Gospel: Mk 9:14-29

When Jesus came to the place where they had left the disciples, they saw many people around and some teachers of the Law arguing with them. When the people saw Jesus, they were astonished and ran to greet him.

He asked, "What are you arguing about with them?" A man answered him from the crowd, "Master, I brought my son to you for he has a dumb spirit. Whenever the spirit seizes him, it throws him down and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not."

Jesus replied, "You faithless people. How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him.

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it shook and convulsed the boy who fell on the ground and began rolling about, foaming at the mouth. Then Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He replied, "From childhood. And it has often thrown him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

Jesus said to him, "Why do you say: 'If you can?' All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe, but help the little faith I have."

Jesus saw that the crowd was increasing rapidly, so he ordered the evil spirit, "Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you: Leave the boy and never enter him again." The evil spirit shook and convulsed the boy and with a terrible shriek came out. The boy lay like a corpse and people said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him and the boy stood up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive out the spirit?" And he answered, "Only prayer can drive out this kind, nothing else."

Commentary

Once we allow the word "if" a place in religion, all is lost. It is like allowing a hole in the bottom of a bucket; no matter how small the hole, everything leaks out. "Why do you say, 'If you can'?" said Jesus. What happens when there is no "if?" "All things are possible for one who believes." Remember that 'belief' isn't a matter of calculating the odds and finding them to be satisfactory. The word 'trust' would translate it better. The great tragedy of misunderstanding at the Reformation, people now see, was that this was missed. What Martin Luther meant by faith included what Catholics meant by hope. Or in algebra(!): Faith (Luther) = faith + hope (Catholic).

"I do believe, help my unbelief," said the man in today's reading. Is that a contradiction? Perhaps yes if you were to take belief as isolated from trust. There's a yes or no quality about pure belief, but there are many degrees of trust; in fact trust is all about degrees. By trusting you learn how to trust, and by trusting again you learn to trust more. Belief (or faith as we prefer to call it) doesn't just lie changeless in the mind; it grows out of itself. That's how every living thing grows.

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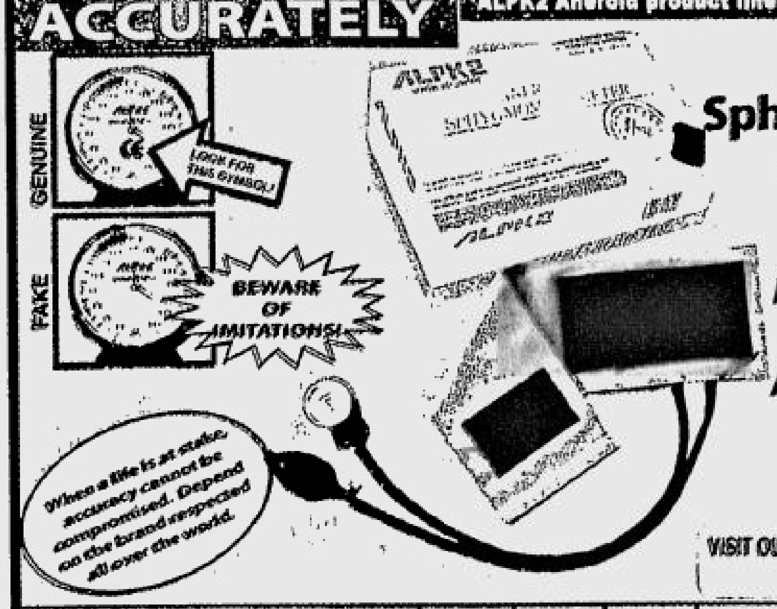
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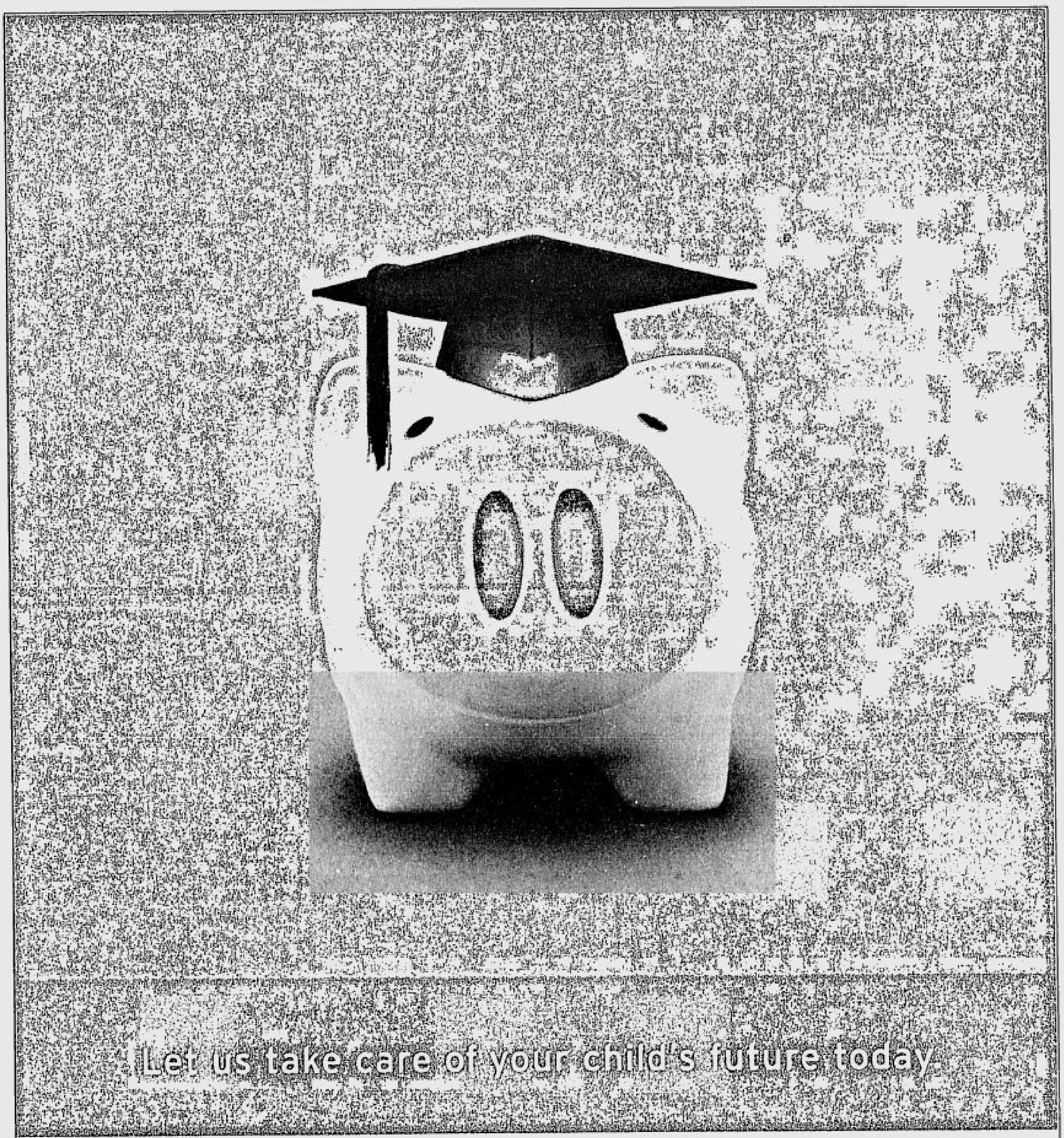

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Abu attacks soldier, is killed

A SUSPECTED Abu Sayyaf member was killed by government troops over the weekend after he sneaked into an army camp in Talipao, Sulu and attacked a soldier with a bolo, a military report said.

The military said Abu Rabali, alias Abu Bi Salih, of Barangay Mahala, Talipao, was shot dead by a member of the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion at around 3 p.m.

It was believed Rabali was seeking to steal firearms when he was spotted by a camp sentry, prompting him to attack the latter with a bolo. The sentry opened fire on Rabali who died on the spot.

Another group of Abu Sayyaf fighters opened fire on houses in Talipao on Saturday, wounding a young girl, the military said. The motive for the attack was unknown.

A band of Abu Sayyaf gunmen also waylaid a motorboat off Basilan on Thursday, robbing four fishermen before taking their boat and forcing them to jump off and swim for shore, military spokesperson Col. Fredesvindo Covarrubias said.

In a related development, two Abu Sayyaf bandits surrendered to the military in Sulu on Saturday.

Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, 3rd Marine Brigade commander, identified the surrenderees as Imran Isnani and Ustab Anji, both belonging to a faction led by Radulan Sahiron, alias Kumander Putol. *Christian V. Esguerra; Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AFP*

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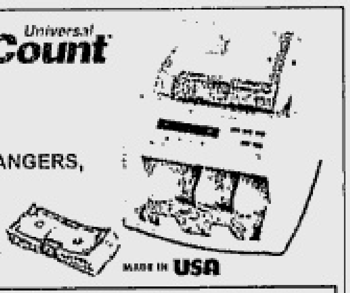

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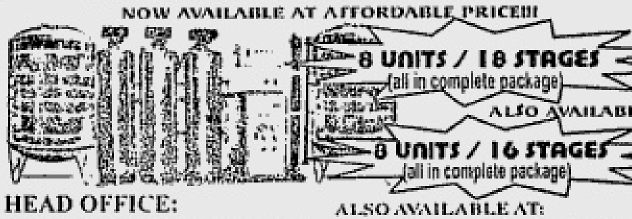

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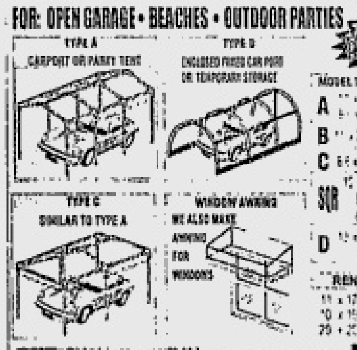

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Cops in Ping campaign hit

By Christian V. Esguerra

MEMBERS of the Philippine National Police are supposed to be non-partisan when it comes to politics, so how come PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. has not stopped certain officers from campaigning for presidential aspirant Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson?

Chief Supt. Francisco Zubia, Lacson's "mistah" [classmate] in Philippine Military Academy Class '71, was reportedly spotted in the candidate's campaign sortie in Quezon province which was sponsored by former PNP chief Recaredo Sarmiento.

Ebdane had earlier warned officers and men of the PNP they would be charged administratively if they dropped their neutrality and showed up at campaign rallies.

But the PNP leadership appears to have changed its tune.

Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, police information officer, yesterday said Zubia could not be reprimanded unless he spoke on stage or distributed leaflets during the campaign sortie. This, he said, would be a clear violation of existing PNP policy.

"We have been monitoring their [officers] activities and there have been no violations so far," Goltiao told the INQUIRER.

Goltiao said he would check if Zubia was among the police security escorts assigned to Lacson. If he was, the spokesperson said Zubia had business being in Lacson's campaign.

A senior police officer yesterday said all the tough talk against "partisan" policemen was just that—talk.

"Ebdane is very lenient, it seems he's afraid of these people," the officer, a police general, told the INQUIRER on condition of anonymity. "These people are obviously campaigning for Lacson but he's [Ebdane] not doing anything about it."

Besides Zubia, other known Lacson boys in the PNP are Directors Lucas Managuelod, Reynaldo Acop and Victor Batac. The three are on "floating" status while Zubia is assigned to the "special oversight committee" which suggests reforms in the police organization.

Managuelod was particularly passionate about being labeled a "partisan" officer.

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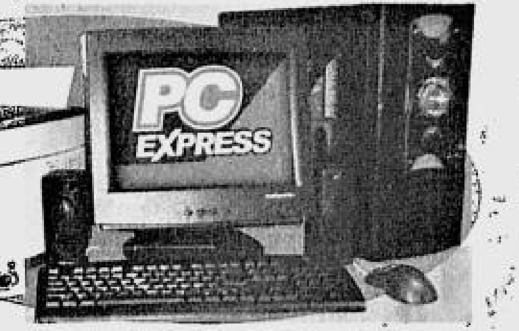

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Bro. Eddie musters big force at Luneta

From page A1

Jaime Cardinal Sin, Villanueva said he understood the poor people who accepted bribes from politicians during the election period to be able to buy food.

"Take the money. They (politicians) just stole this money from you. This is from the national coffers. But vote for your welfare and your children's future," he said.

Villanueva also said a special prayer for deceased veteran actor Nestor de Villa, a born-again Christian who, according to his wife, had wanted to attend the political rally before he died.

Gary Valenciano sang after Villanueva's campaign speech.

Meanwhile, appalled by Villanueva's statements against Ms Macapagal, Malacañang is not turning the other cheek to the erstwhile religious ally whom the President has been trying to woo back to her side.

ELECTION 2004

The President's spokespersons, Ignacio Bunye and Michael Defensor, yesterday took turns assailing Villanueva for saying that he and the Filipino people were betrayed by Ms Macapagal when she broke her promise not to run in May.

The JIL leader also accused the President of offering him a government position and land in return for his withdrawal from the presidential race.

"These are self-serving statements of Brother Eddie and maybe he is looking for an issue to project himself so he made these claims," Bunye said in an interview over radio RMN.

"But what is important is the President is running on the basis of good government and [conducting] high-level campaigning and we will no longer pay attention to this mudslinging," Bunye said.

Change of mind

He said the President's decision to change her mind was necessary because, he claimed, she was the best choice.

"The issue now is who can really bring about change in the country and the President believes that she has the experience and competence to improve the economy and change the system of governance. That is the reason she is running," Bunye said.

Defensor took exception to Villanueva likening himself to Jesus Christ and the President to Peter the Apostle who betrayed Jesus.

"But in the end, St. Peter returned to Jesus and he led the church in spreading the faith," Defensor said. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

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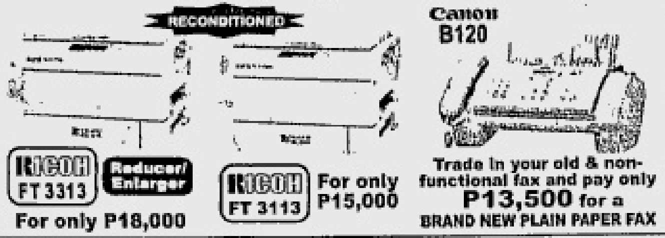

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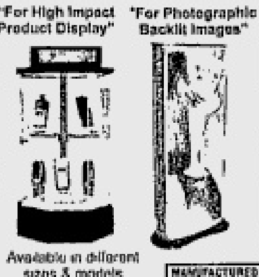

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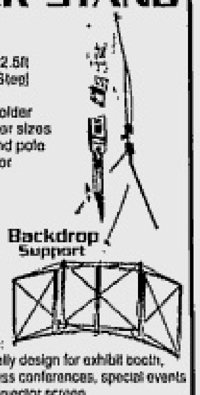

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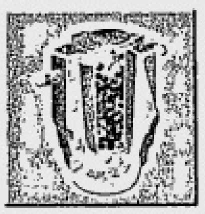

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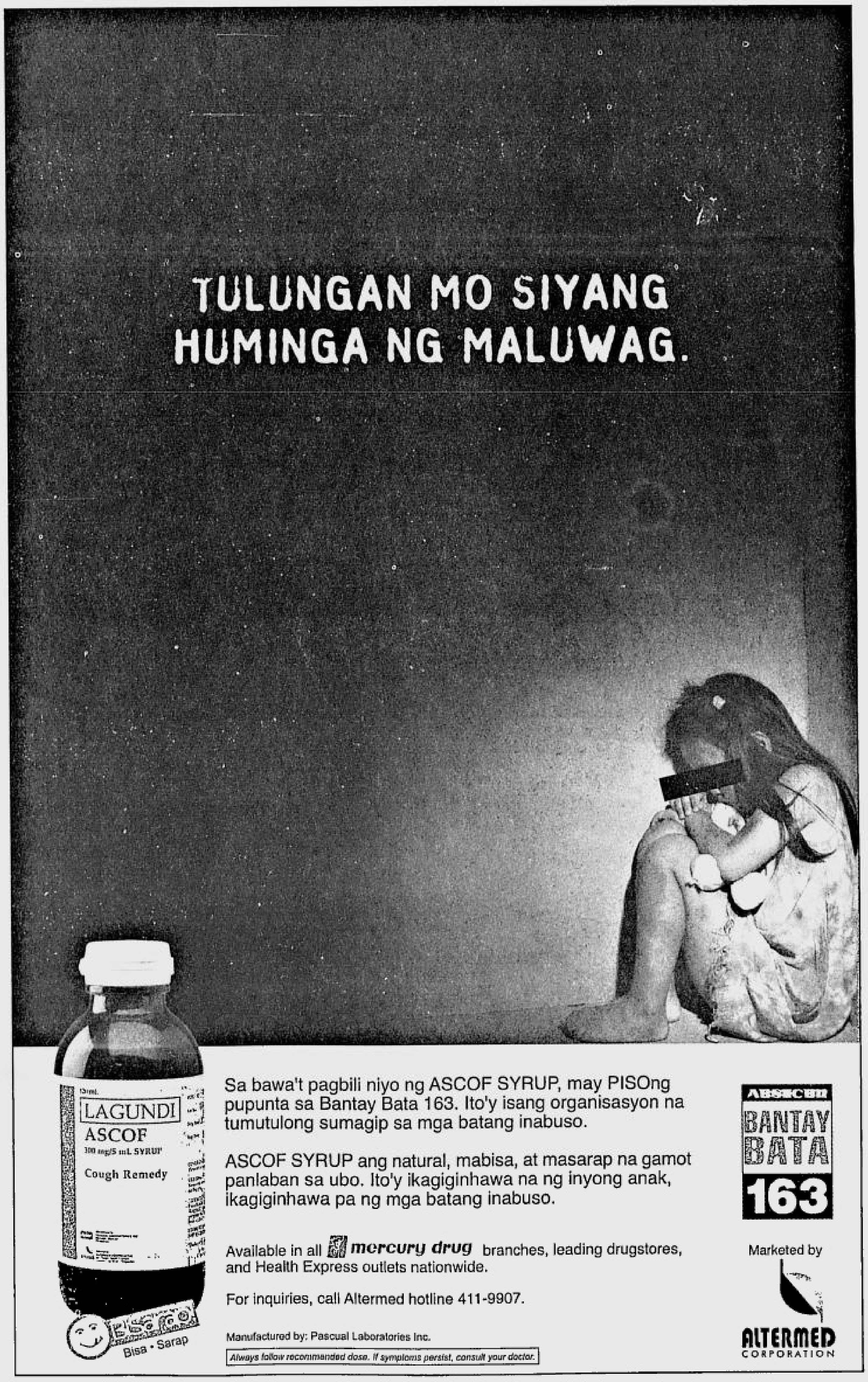

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RP raps UN failure in Middle East

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES has expressed exasperation over the United Nations Security Council's failure to take more concrete steps to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

In a statement, Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr., the country's permanent representative to the UN, called on the Security Council to "exert more efforts to bring Israel and the Palestinians back to the negotiating table [rather] than just go through a monthly routine of briefings" on the situation in the troubled region.

Baja issued the statement during a briefing on the Middle East situation at UN Headquarters in New York City.

"Oftentimes windows of opportunity for peace are opened only to be closed after each suicide bombing and retaliatory action," Baja lamented.

"The situation is both tragic and frustrating but it is more tragic and frustrating when one considers that there is a road map for peace that has been worked out by the international community and endorsed by the Security Council through Resolution 1515," he said.

The road map requires both Israelis and Palestinians to, among other things, undertake parallel steps that would lead to a two-state solution to the problem. These steps include a halt to Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israel and the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlements from occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Security Council embraced the road map prepared by the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation when it passed Resolution 1515 last year.

"Obviously, the mere endorsement by the Security Council of the road map for peace is not enough to bring the two sides to negotiate peace," Baja noted. "Endorsements sound empty when no follow up steps are taken," he said.

Baja said the Security Council should give flesh and life to Resolution 1515 by taking steps to implement its provisions.

According to Baja, the Philippines had proposed the creation of a mechanism to implement Resolution 1515 during informal consultations on the Middle East situation last month.

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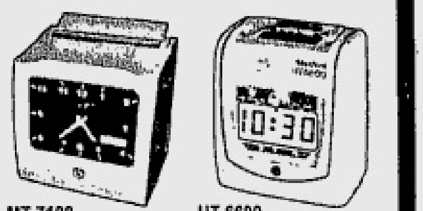

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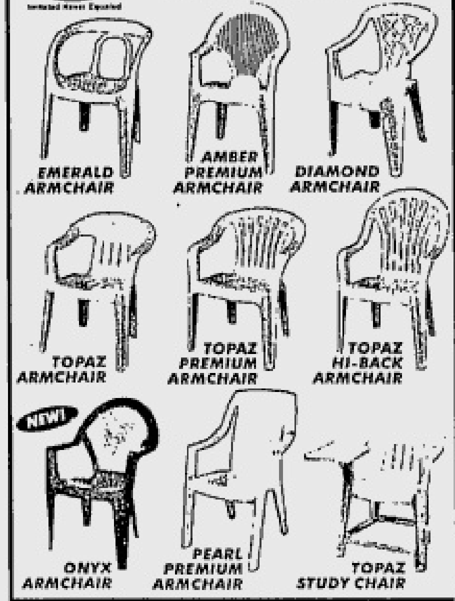
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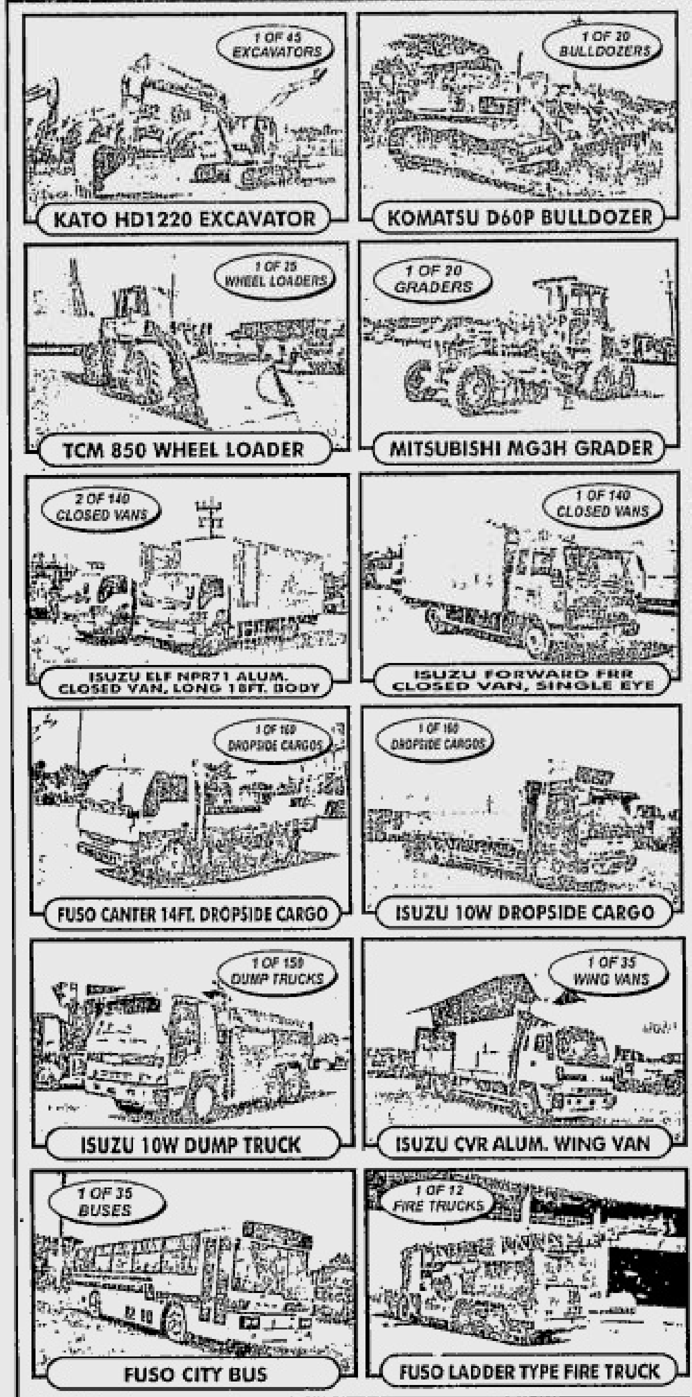
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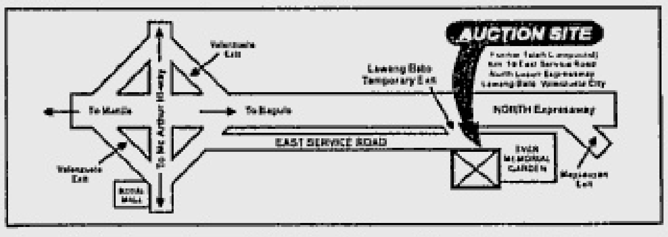
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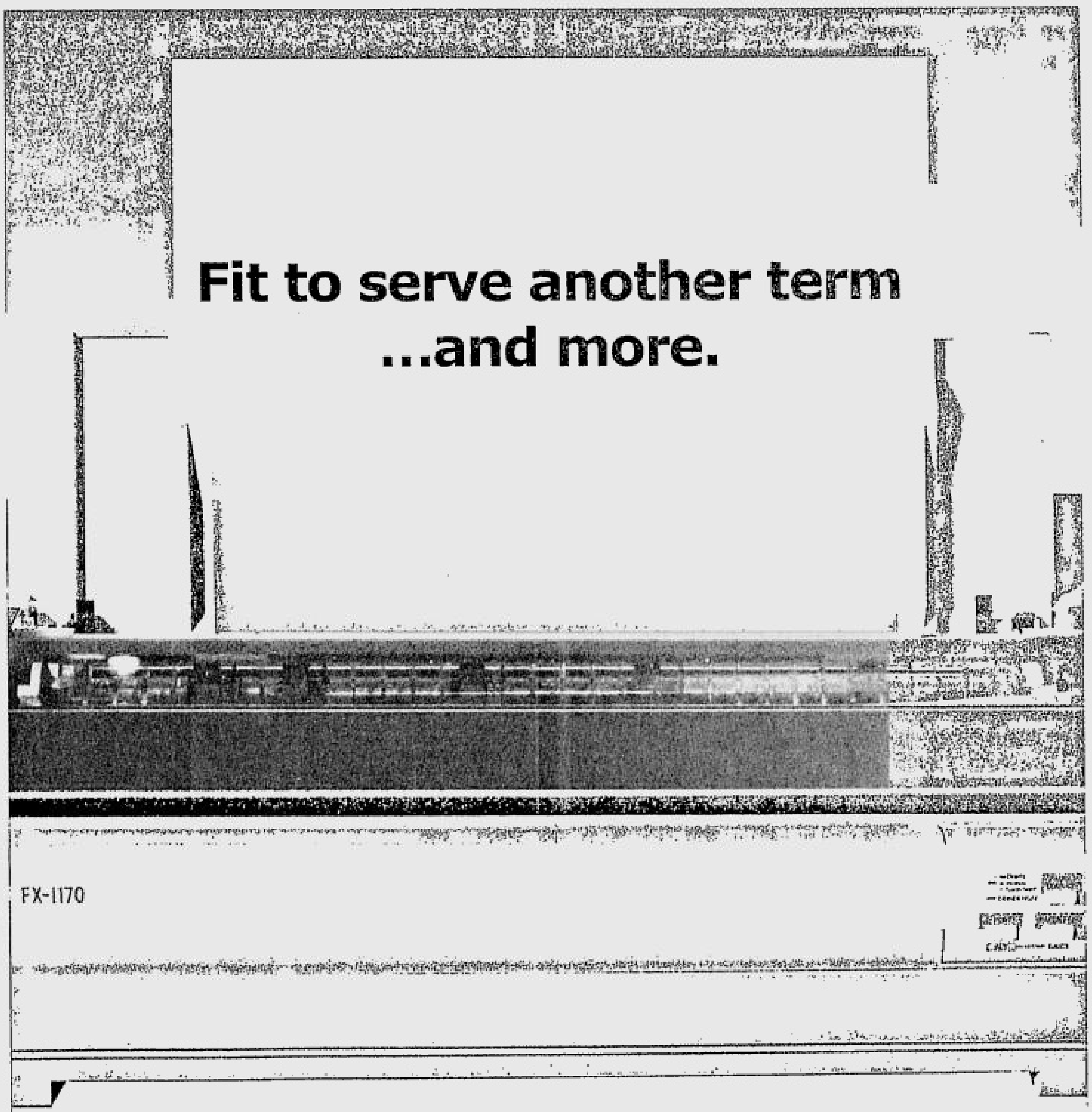
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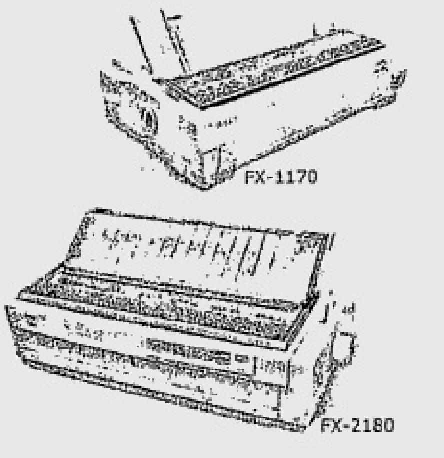
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Report: Bin Laden cornered in Pakistan

LONDON—US and British special forces have cornered al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in a mountainous area in northwest Pakistan, near the Afghanistan border, the Sunday Express newspaper reported.

Quoting "a US intelligence source," it said Bin Laden and "up to 50 fanatical henchmen" were inside an area 16 km wide and deep "north of the town of Khanozai and the city of Quetta."

"He is boxed in," the unidentified source was quoted by the tabloid as saying, adding that US special forces were "absolutely confident" that he could not escape.

According to the source, Bin Laden moved into the area, "in the desolate Toba Kakar mountains," about one month ago from another area 240 km to the south, the Sunday Express said.

In Washington, a Defense Department spokesperson declined to comment on the report.

Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar is believed to be with Bin Laden, according to the report.

The area is under surveillance from a geostationary spy satellite while US and British special forces await orders to move in, the newspaper said in its early edition, received late Saturday.

Al-Qaida is held responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that killed nearly 3,000 people in 2001. More recently, it has been suspected of supporting insurgent attacks on US forces in Iraq.

On Thursday, Gen. Richard Meyers, chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, said US forces were engaged in "intense" efforts to capture Bin Laden, but held back from saying where he might be hiding.

"There are areas where we think it is most likely he is, and they remain the same," said Meyers, who was speaking to reporters in Washington. "They haven't changed in months," said Myers.

BIN LADEN

Asked whether the al-Qaida leader was believed to be in Pakistan, the general replied: "Don't know that. We think in that border region somewhere. We don't know where it is precisely."

The Sunday Express said it was also told in London by "a senior Republican close to the White House and the Pentagon" this past week that Bin Laden had been located.

"They have found Bin Laden," the source—described as an "intimate" of the family of US President George W. Bush—was quoted as saying. "They now know where he is within a manageable area which can be watched and controlled."

The Sunday Express said Bin Laden's whereabouts had been discovered from "a combination of CIA paramilitaries and special forces, plus image analysis by geographers and soil experts."

"They studied the background in Bin Laden's last video and matched it to rocks in the Toba Kakar region," the newspaper said.

"A two-man special forces surveillance unit then infiltrated the area," it said, adding that they picked up their first clues that Bin Laden was in the area within a week. *AFP*

China says its bird flu coming under control

BEIJING—China said Sunday its bird flu epidemic was coming under control, after five straight days of no new reports of the virus that has killed millions of fowl and at least 22 people in Asia.

The announcement came as the government lifted its quarantine of a village where the nation's first confirmed case of the disease was reported, allowing the 24 residents to step out for the first time in 20 days, state media reported.

The eight households on the outskirts of Dingdang, a town in south China's Guangxi region, were quarantined after ducks there died of bird flu, state television said.

Since that first case was confirmed, bird flu has appeared in poultry in 16 of China's 31 regions, prompting authorities to slaughter sick fowl and monitor farmers for flu symptoms.

As quarantines are lifted on other affected villages in coming days, China expects its epidemic "to turn from high incidence to gradual control," the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing the Ministry of Agriculture.

China has reported no cases of bird flu in humans. But the World Health Organization has expressed concern that China might have human cases the government doesn't know about, given the vast territory affected by the disease.

"There's always the potential that the sporadic human case might not be picked up by surveillance systems," said Roy Wadia, WHO spokesperson in Beijing. "As far as we're concerned, we're still advising the authorities to be on high alert." *AP*

Blair announces bid for 3rd term

LONDON—British Prime Minister Tony Blair, facing rising public doubt and a revitalized Conservative opposition, is determined to lead his increasingly rebellious Labor Party into a third successive term in government.

"I will be putting myself forward," he told the News of the World newspaper. "Whatever the problems and pressures this is an immensely enjoyable and fulfilling job and I intend to carry on doing it."

"The times are tougher but I am a tougher person than I was six or seven years ago. You have people kicking lumps out of you, but you can live with it, and I do," he said.

Blair, the country's longest serving Labor prime minister, dragged Labor from the left to the center and led it out of 18 years in the electoral wilderness to a landslide victory in 1997—repeating the feat in 2001.

He is expected to call a new general election in the first half of 2005, but has seen his own trust ratings tumble in the wake of the invasion of Iraq nearly a year ago and the failure to find the much vaunted illegal weapons of mass destruction.

He took a further hit months later over the suicide of a weapons scientist at the heart of a row between the government and the BBC over allegations Blair's office had deliberately exaggerated the threat from Iraq to support its case for war.

Sensing his weakening grip, a revolt by large numbers of his own party brought the government to within a whisker of defeat over highly controversial education reforms. *Reuters*

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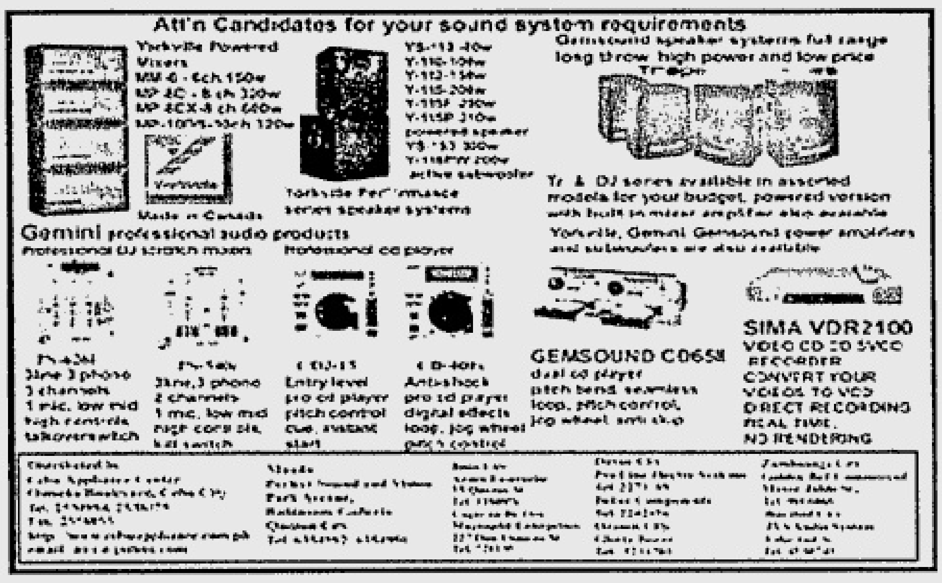

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At least seven killed in Jerusalem bus bombing

JERUSALEM—A suicide bomber blew up on a crowded Israeli commuter bus in Jerusalem on Sunday, killing at least seven people and wounding dozens, police said.

The blast came a day before the World Court starts hearings on the legality of a barrier in the West Bank that Israel says keeps suicide bombers out, but which Palestinians call a land grab.

The explosion turned the green Egged number 14 bus into a charred skeleton at a busy intersection near the Inbal Hotel, where leaders of major US Jewish organizations were meeting.

Jerusalem police chief Mickey Levy said a suicide bomber blew up in the middle of the bus during the morning rush hour at the start of the Israeli work week, killing at least seven people and wounding some 60.

"People were screaming 'mommy, daddy.' There were body parts everywhere including some hands and feet scattered outside the bus," medic Reuven Pohl said.

Weeping pedestrians streamed from the scene.

A Palestinian suicide bomber last struck in Jerusalem on Jan. 29, killing 11 people on a bus.

The International Court of Justice in the Hague is due to start hearings on Monday on the legality of a barrier of wire and concrete that Israel is building inside the West Bank and which it says helps to stop bombings.

Palestinians call it an attempt to seal a hold on land that Israel has occupied since the 1967 Middle East war and where they want a state.

"This attack in Jerusalem is a grim reminder of Israel's need for a security fence to stop such terror in its tracks," said an official from Israeli Prime Minisiter Ariel Sharon's office.

The Palestinian Authority condemned the bombing and said the world should step up efforts to end more than three years of conflict.

"We condemn this attack and we urge ... especially the United States, to step up its efforts and revive the peace process because this is the only way to break this vicious cycle," Saeb Erekat, a Palestinian cabinet minister, told Reuters. *Reuters*

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Israel begins tearing down part of barrier

JERUSALEM—Israel began dismantling a section of its West Bank separation barrier on Sunday, but Foreign Minister Sylvan Shalom reaffirmed his country's opposition to re-siting the entire structure along the so-called Green Line boundary, Israeli public radio reported.

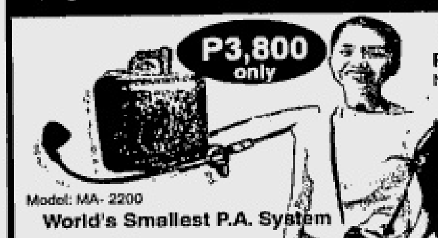
In line with an announcement made earlier by the defense ministry, the radio said an 8-km stretch of the barrier that encloses the Palestinian town of Baka al-Sharkiya inside an enclave in the northern West Bank was being taken down.

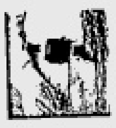
The move comes the day before the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ), which sits in The Hague, is due to convene to study the legality of the separation barrier.

Commenting on the move, Shalom told Israeli public radio that there was no question of re-siting the separation barrier along the Green Line, which marks the 1949 armistice boundary between Israeli and Palestinian territories.

"Perhaps the time chosen to do this dismantling is not judicious, but in any case the world community wants us to build the barrier along the Green Line, and that is out of the question because the barrier would then be a political one, whereas its vocation is purely security-related," he said.

"In three years of Intifada, we have been targeted by some 19,000 attacks, more than a hundred of which were by suicide bombers, which alone caused more than half of our casualties," the minister said, referring to the long-running Palestinian uprising against Israel. *AFP*





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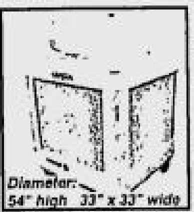

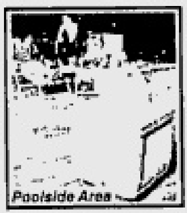

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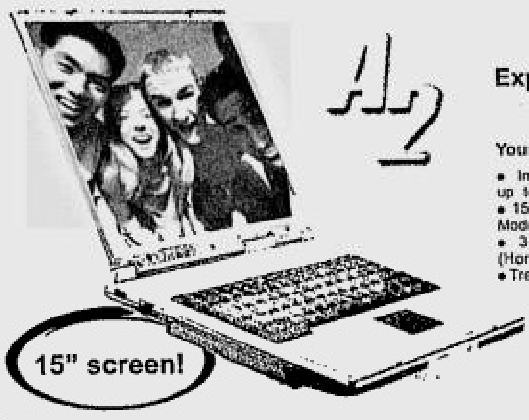

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SO THE PEOPLE SHALL KNOW !

COMELEC CANNOT ADMINISTER THE COMING 2004 ELECTIONS - IT CANNOT EVEN RESOLVE A SIMPLE 2001 CASE BEFORE IT AFTER SEVERAL YEARS and IT IS NOW 2004

Year 2001, Month of May, I filed a protest case before RTCourt of Ilocos Sur. I won the protest in July 2002.

My losing opponent went up to COMELEC under SPR NO. 30-2002 on 23 July 2OO2 on a petition for certiorari and instantly secured a TRO from COMELEC on the very same day.

Since then to this day, Mid-February 2004, COMELEC has sat down on my case, despite numerous reminders/motions for Early Resolution.

Barely, 4 months are left of the disputed term, and COMELEC has not done anything, instead, it has deliberately DELAYED the decision on my case.

I now say - COMELEC is an office that is devoted to INJUSTICE, and COMELEC, if it cannot even resolve with facility, a simple uncomplicated case like mine - HOW CAN COMELEC MANAGE TO ADMINISTER THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS.??

If COMELEC can concentrate only in the money-making contracts for validating machines, counting machines, electronic transmissions and just leave cases like mine on the side, HOW CAN COMELEC RUN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS ?

If COMELEC can deliberately delay and delay the resolution of my case so that INJUSTICE will be perpetrated, and my losing opponent can continue to sit forever as Mayor, despite having lost the protest, HOW CAN ANYBODY EXPECT COMELEC TO BE FAIR AND JUST in the forthcoming elections ?

If COMELEC EN BANC cannot explain WHY it has not decided and resolved my case - SPR NO. 30-2002 on a mere Motion for Reconsideration, up to this day, despite the fact that the Comelec Second Division had already unanimously resolved the same in my favor, COMELEC has no business existing, and it has no business administering the elections.

I dare COMELEC and Chairman Abalos to tell the people all the details of my case and how my case was intentionally delayed and delayed by the COMELEC En Banc.

I dare COMELEC and Chairman Abalos to tell the people WHY Comelec has so favored my opponent, by the deliberate act of sitting down on my case and intentionally NOT resolving the same for the past YEARS.

I dare COMELEC and Chairman Abalos to tell the people - HOW MUCH IS INVOLVE WHEN COMELEC CONTINOUS TO DELIBERATELY INCUR TREMENDOUS DELAYS IN MY CASE.

I dare COMELEC to tell the people why in other cases similar to mine, there is no delay whatsoever, while my case has been long long delayed. Is there truth to the saying that at COMELEC - DELAYING IS REWARDING !!

I dare COMELEC to tell the people - HOW TRUE IS THE ADDITIONAL SAYING that at the COMELEC - cases are resolved based on considerations other than legal ?

I demand for an EXPLANATION why COMELEC and Chairman Abalos has not acted on my case to this day. Is there a REWARD to the COMELEC commissioners if my case is delayed ? What are the CONSIDERATIONS other than legal, that has led COMELEC to prolong and prolong the decision in my case ?

Finally, let me say this - My case was decided by the Second Division on a 3-0 unanimous vote. On Motion for Reconsideration with the COMELEC En Banc, the only way to reverse the unanimous ruling of the Second Division is that all the remaining 4 other members must vote against me [assuming that the 3 that voted for me in the Division will maintain their votes]. Why will it take YEARS for the COMELEC En Banc to decide my case on a mere Motion for Reconsideration ?

If COMELEC can resolve the case of FPJ in less than a month, both in the Division and the En Banc, why will COMELEC take YEARS and YEARS to resolve my case? What is so REWARDING about delaying my case ? What are the CONSIDERATIONS other than legal, that are considered in prolonging the adjudication of my case ?

COMELEC MUST TELL THE PEOPLE, SO THE PEOPLE MAY KNOW - ESPECIALLY MY CONSTITUENTS IN STO. DOMINGO, ILOCOS SUR.

Alfred Figueras
Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur

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Iran hardliners set to win disputed polls

TEHRAN—Iran's turbulent experiment with reforms was set to be halted Sunday, with conservatives and hardliners all but confirmed as winners of controversial parliamentary elections that most of their reformist rivals were barred from contesting.

Top regime figures trumpeted what they said was a "massive turnout," and supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the "totally free, healthy and legal" elections had dealt a massive blow to those urging a boycott.

He said that it was "the people who had emerged the winner in this election and it was the United States, the Zionists and the enemies of Iran who lost."

But with ballots still being counted, nationwide turnout appeared to be headed to around the 50 percent mark—and just 28 percent in the capital—a sharp drop from the last Majlis elections when two-thirds of the electorate took part.

This would be one of the lowest turnout figures since the 1979 Islamic revolution, but still above some dire predictions that only a tiny minority would rally behind the regime and its often awkward mix of theocracy and "Islamic democracy."

A blend of hardliners, conservatives and independents—a label under which many other right-wingers have stood—appeared set to replace a noisy but largely ineffectual reformist-held assembly.

Their win will further isolate embattled President Mohammad Khatami, whose final term ends in June 2005, and sound a death knoll for his effort to liberalize the country's political and social systems.

The hardline Guardians Council, the body behind the controversial mass blacklisting of over 2,000 reformist candidates and 87 sitting MPs, said Friday's vote would transform the Majlis into a body "guided by spirituality."

Those reformists who were approved and did not boycott were struggling to return just a handful of deputies to the 290-seat chamber. They were able to contest just over half of the seats up for grabs.

Definitive results were not expected before Monday.

With 190 of 207 districts reporting, almost 19 million ballots had been counted, about 41 percent of the 46.3-million electorate, according to data released by the interior ministry.

So far, around 172 MPs have been elected and 36 seats where a single candidate failed to win 25 percent of ballots cast will have to be fought over in a second round.

Of the first 157 MPs elected, the conservative Jam-e Jam paper said 108 were conservatives, 25 reformists and 24 independents.

Several large cities still had to report, meaning the turnout figure was expected to rise to around the 50 percent mark, according to estimates from several officials.

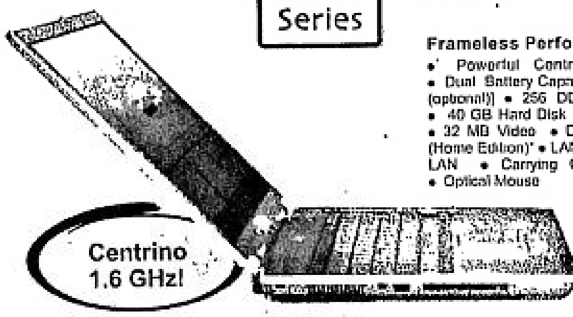
Turnout in Tehran was at a poor 28 percent, with initial indications putting conservatives—who can rely on a hardcore of regime loyalists—far ahead.

In the 2000 Majlis elections, 67 percent of eligible voters took part nationwide and produced a landslide win for the reformers.

But they have since been hit with mounting criticism for their failure to deliver greater democracy or a focused effort against unemployment and inflation.

Many voters Friday appeared to have been lured by right-wing pledges to revive a stagnant economy and create jobs.

AFP



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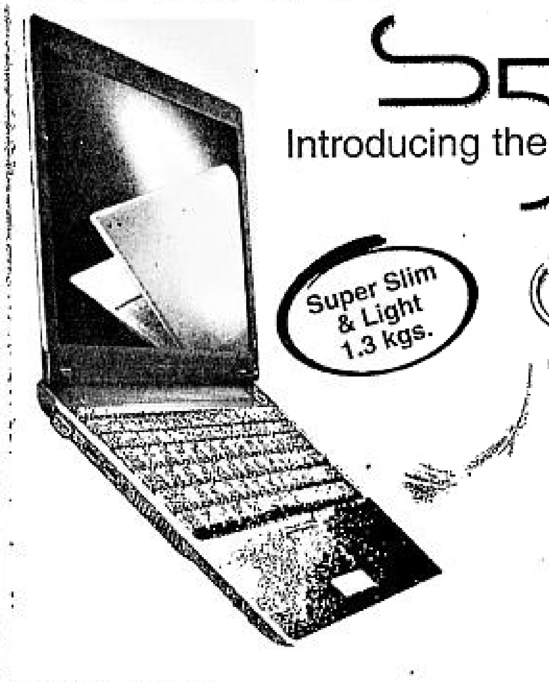

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Libya's atomic bomb

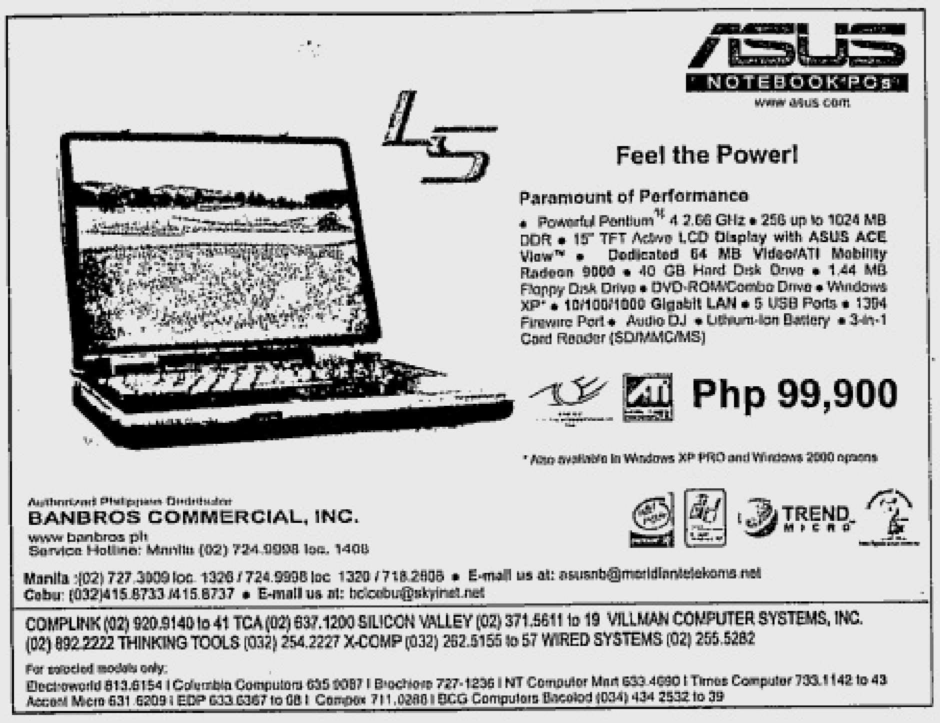
VIENNA—Over two decades, Libya secretly produced weapons grade nuclear material in a programme to make an atomic bomb that was more extensive than previously believed, the U.N. nuclear watchdog said in a report on Friday. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report outlines how Libya relied on an intricate network of illicit atomic suppliers who skirted international sanctions to sell sensitive technology to states like Libya, Iran and North Korea. The report, authored by IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei, showed Libya's nuclear programme began as far back as the early 1980s. *Reuters*

Haiti's crisis worsens

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Haiti plunged deeper into crisis on Saturday as political opponents of President Jean Bertrand Aristide rejected international appeals to accept a power-sharing plan that stops short of the embattled leader's departure. At the same time, the United States ordered the departure of most of its remaining diplomats in the country, citing unstable security amid the spread of an armed insurgency also demanding the president's ouster spread and attacks by pro-Aristide gangs on the opposition and journalists. The move by the State Department is likely to fuel an exodus from Haiti of hundreds of US, Canadian and French citizens, mostly aid workers and missionaries, spurred by increasingly dire warnings that the most impoverished country in the Americas might descend into anarchy. *AFP*

Japan's 10th mad cow case

TOKYO—Japan confirmed another case of mad cow disease on Sunday, the 10th since the brain-wasting illness was discovered in the country in September 2001. It was the country's first new case of the disease formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) since November. Officials at the Health and Agriculture Ministry said an eight-year-old Holstein cow from Kanagawa Prefecture, near Tokyo, had tested positive for BSE. It said the cow would be incinerated. There have been no reports of people in Japan being affected by the human form of BSE, Creuzfeldt-Jakob Disease, which has killed about 130 people in Europe. But Japan's food industry has been hard hit, especially after a ban was placed on the imports of U.S. beef products in December following the first BSE case in the United States. *Reuters*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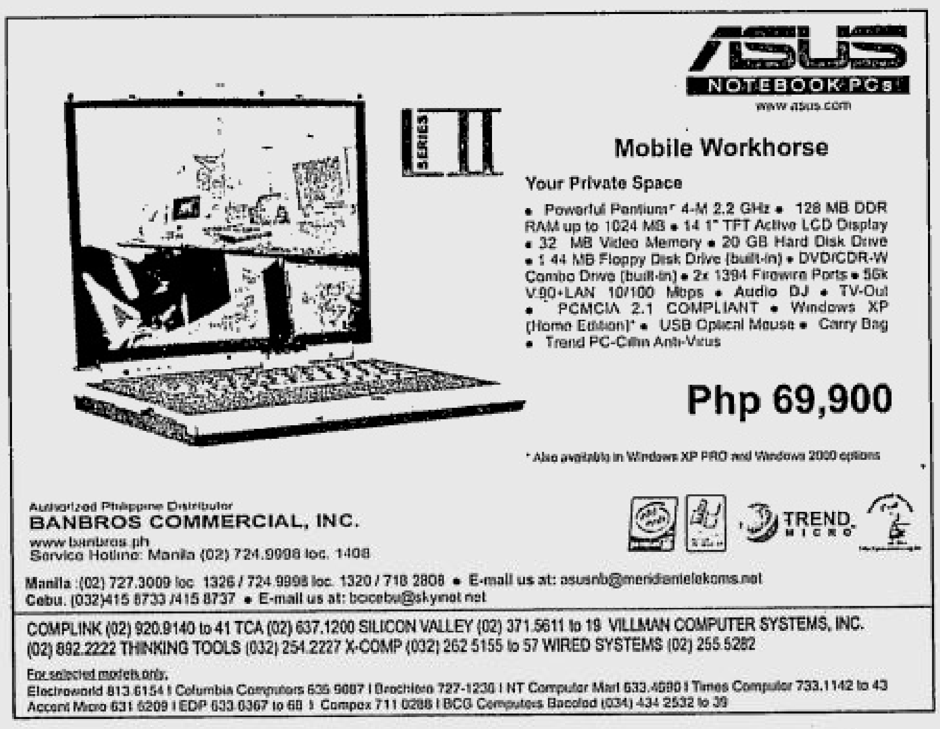
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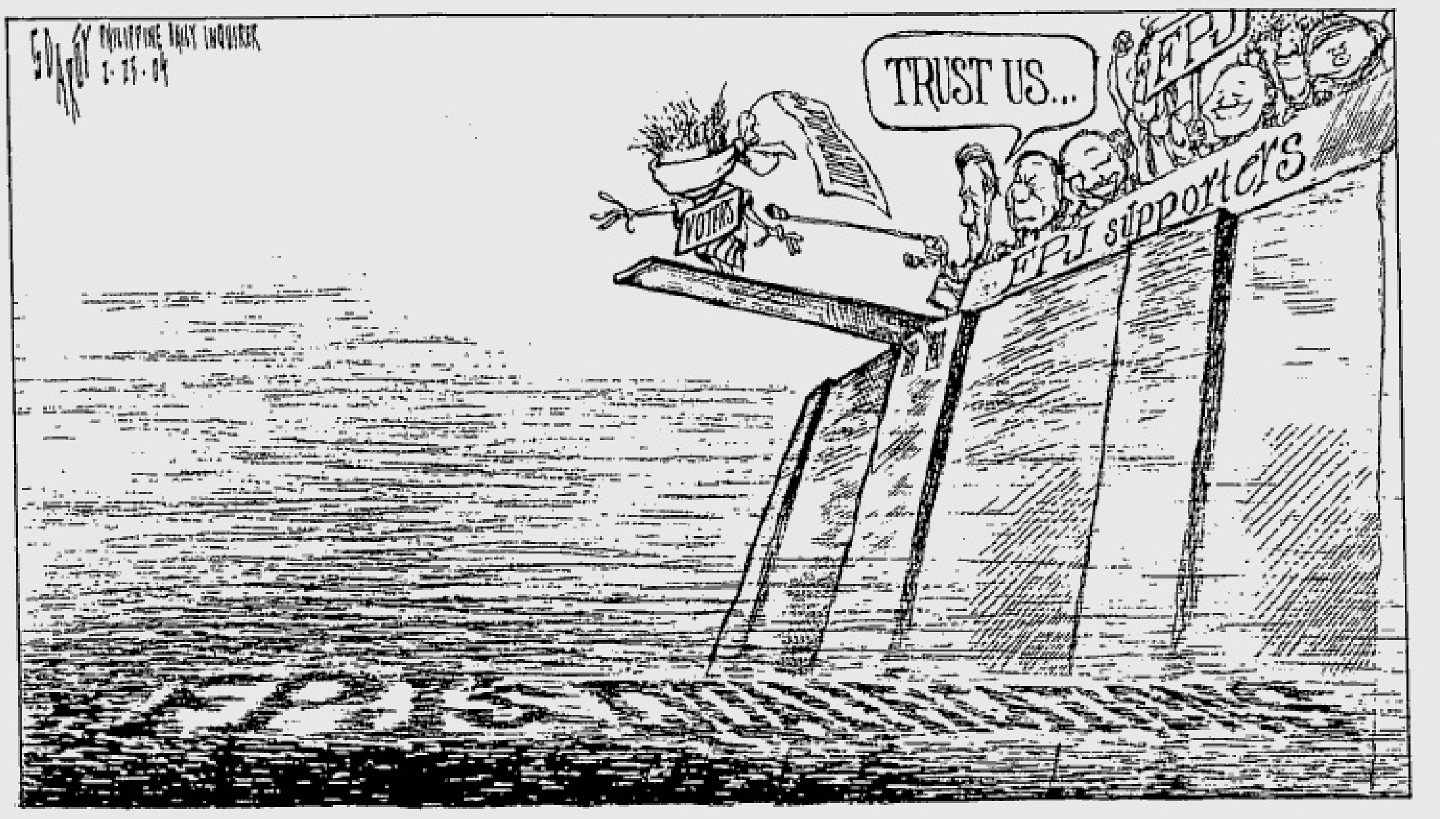

Court's in session

EDITORIAL

THE ISSUE of jurisdiction has not been decided yet, but this much we can already say: The Supreme Court has handled the potentially explosive citizenship case against presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. with abundant judicial tact.

Some lawyers, Davide Court critic Rene Saguisag among them, have argued that the tribunal should not have taken cognizance of the anti-Poe petitions at all.

In the United States, from which our theory of the judiciary's role and responsibilities originates, the federal Supreme Court exercises its right to choose the cases it will decide with great frequency, and often without benefit of an explanation. (This explains why its docket is dramatically shorter than our Supreme Court's.)

In our practice, and especially since the restoration of democracy 18 years ago, the Supreme Court has seldom taken a pass on the great issues of the day. In part, this may be over-compensation for the high court's meekness during martial law. But history also plays a role in another, more positive way: The public has learned to turn to the Supreme Court to provide some clarity in times of uncertainty.

Some of the Court's decisions, especially those dealing with big-ticket economic initiatives, have been vexing. But in the main, the Supreme Court's decisions have acted as the indispensable rudder of the ship of state.

This is not to say that the high court will be certain to rule on the Poe case, which has already agitated thousands of supporters of the united opposition candidate. It may remand at least one of the petitions, the one appealing the Commission on Elections' junking of the disqualification petition, to the Comelec. It may consolidate all petitions. It may rule that another agency of government is in fact responsible for the case. It may grant the petitions, or throw one, two or all of them out.

But partly because a petitioner before the Comelec has the right to appeal the agency's decision before the high court, and partly because Poe's main lawyer, ex-solicitor general Estelito Mendoza, originally argued before the Comelec that only the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over the matter, we are relieved that the tribunal has agreed to hear the case.

We believe the public shares our sense of relief too, especially after Thursday's oral arguments. Through that 12-hour session, which ended at past 1 a.m. on Friday, the justices signaled to an anxious public that they understood the urgency of the issue. (Contrast this, for instance, with the oral arguments on the second impeachment case against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., at a time when the high court was itself under attack. The justices scheduled the arguments over a rather leisurely two days, breaking up for dinner.)

Through their appointment, yet again, of high-profile "friends of the court"—two experts in constitutional law, one in international law, and one in civil law—to shed light on the many issues involved in a case without real precedent, the justices also showed their willingness, yet again, to consult the wider legal community, to seek the counsel of those who would have not otherwise participated.

The argument by some lawyers, Saguisag again included, that the high court invited the four *amici curiae* because the justices had already made a "prejudgment" is not only specious but morally dubious. "It telegraphed that instead of listening to serious threshold questions on venue, standing, prematurity or ripeness and lack of a proper factual record, which it could resolve on its own, it was seeking immediate counsel on the substantive issues, suggesting prejudgment," Saguisag wrote in his newspaper column. "In the old days, the Court's members were seen as the best and the brightest. No *amici* would be named for years." The bad faith is breathtaking.

Instead of welcoming the participation of eminent lawyers, Saguisag belittles the Court that was wise enough to invite them in the first place.

But Saguisag's evident contempt for mere mortals who were too weak to resist an appointment to the Supreme Court (unlike, say, himself) prevents him from seeing the obvious. The use of friends of the court is not a fig leaf to cover judicial nakedness. Rather, it is a tree wide enough to give shade to the anxious.

Disguised campaign billboards and streamers

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

GOOD news: the Quezon Memorial Park in Quezon City and the streets leading to it are clear of illegal posters, although the "Batang Olympics" posters with the photographs of Mayor Sonny Belmonte and Vice Mayor Bistek Bautista, both running for reelection, are still there. And there are several new billboards saying "Fight Drugs," again with the photographs of Belmonte and Bautista, and a big one facing City Hall, also with the face of Belmonte, announcing something.

These are all thinly disguised campaign billboards and posters and are illegal. Otherwise, why is it necessary to put the photos of Belmonte and Bautista? The people of Quezon City were not born yesterday. They know when their mayor and vice mayor are trying to pull their legs.

There are also a number of streamers in the city with Vincent Belmonte greeting his constituents "Happy Valentine." Valentine's Day has been over more than a week ago, why are those streamers still there? Streamers are allowed only during campaign rallies; they are to be taken down after the rally. So Valentine's Day or not, those streamers are illegal. Penalties for violations: disqualification of the candidate, fine and imprisonment for the candidate and his workers. Candidates are usually given three days to take down the offending streamers after which disqualification proceedings are supposed to begin. The most insulting action of the candidates is that they are trying to fool the people with greetings and announcements in their illegal billboards and streamers while at the same time asking for their support.

Like I said in our Feb. 20 column, the NGOs, church and social groups, homeowners' associations, youth clubs, etc., should wage campaigns for people NOT to vote for candidates with illegal campaign materials. Unless the politicians realize that their violations will cost them votes, they will continue to flaunt our laws.

I don't know who we should thank for the cleaning of the Circle and the streets near it: the Commission on Elections, the Metro Manila Development Authority, the management of the park itself (Charito Planas, administrator of the park, promised she would have the posters removed), or nearby City Hall? I did see on television Comelec workers taking down giant billboards of candidates. Chair Benjamin Abalos, while enforcing the law, is actually saving the candidates money. Those billboards cost a lot of money. They will need those savings to pay for their television and print advertising whose ceilings the poll body has raised.

But the security force of the nearby University of the Philippines deserve opprobrium for allowing the pasting of thousands of campaign posters on the wall behind the campus, facing Balara and the offices of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. The MMDA did a wonderful job of clearing this back wall of the stalls of the *talipapa*, *carinderias* and sidewalk vendors. But now, it is ugly again because of the illegal posters.

Almost all the candidates have posters there but the most numerous are those of Jinggoy Estrada. Miriam Defensor-Santiago has none, hurray for her! *Dapat lang* because she has filed disqualification complaints against candidates with illegal posters. I wonder what the Comelec is doing with her complaints. Surprisingly, the sectoral parties such as Bayan Muna and Akbayan, who should behave better, also have illegal posters.

And what about Councilor "Ka Resty" Malangen about whose illegal campaign materials we already wrote two columns? Ka Resty has defaced the bridge and the walls of the barangay behind the St. Luke's Medical Center by painting them with foot-high letters of his name. Those are premature campaigning and illegal campaign materials. The Comelec should have these signs painted over, charge the cost to Ka Resty and disqualify him.

* * *

I would like to pay tribute to a good man who has passed on to the Great Beyond. He is Dr. Rene Bordador, president of the Tierra Bella Homeowners' Association and Focals (Federation of Congressional Avenue Lot owners and Subdivisions), who died of leukemia last Friday. Under Dr. Bordador's leadership, Focals worked for years to have the long overdue Congressional Avenue completed. Only 1 kilometer of the avenue remains to be finished but for some strange reason, the Department of Public Works and Highways forgot for many years to finish it. When completed, Congressional Avenue will ease the traffic on Commonwealth and Quezon avenues and Edsa because it will bypass these streets and come out opposite the Muñoz Market on Roosevelt Avenue. But year after year, Congress forgot to appropriate any budget for it.

Focals, led by Dr. Bordador, begged for funds from the pork barrel of congressmen. The biggest contributor is Quezon City Rep. Chuck Mathay. Senators Noli de Castro and Juan Flavier, and Representatives Jimmy Lopez, Arnulfo Fuentebella and Butch Abad who live in Tierra Pura and Tierra Bella along the unfinished Congressional Avenue and therefore would be benefited by its completion, didn't give a single centavo.

Now, construction has ground to a halt. No more funds, and again Congress did not appropriate any budget for it, though it appropriated billions for pork barrel. Dr. Bordador died without seeing his project completed.

I have deep gratitude toward Dr. Bordador. When I had a heart bypass operation two years ago, Dr. Bordador was one of those who donated blood for me. We were blood brothers, he liked to say. I donated blood for his transfusion, along with others, but it didn't save him.

May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest, Doc.

Scary

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'VE written about the infinite dangers of the Supreme Court ruling against Fernando Poe Jr. on the citizenship issue. This is a political issue and not just a legal one, and its consequences will be felt far and wide.

But infinitely grave as this danger is, there's a danger even graver. One indicated by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's effort to disqualify FPJ on this ground. That is the danger she represents. I personally have not seen anyone crave power so badly since Ferdinand Marcos, one who would go to any length to get it or keep it. One who would lie, cheat and steal to get it or keep it, and not in any metaphorical sense either. She lied about not running, she is cheating through the Comelec and she is stealing a rival's citizenship away, quite apart from using taxpayers' money—our money—to fund her campaign. No, I mean lie, cheat and steal completely literally.

It is not height alone GMA and Marcos have in common.

They have differences too, of course. Chief of them is that Marcos was an elected president, and a fairly popular one at the start. Or he and Imelda were, unbelievable as that may sound now. They beat the tandem of Diosdado and Eva Macapagal, GMA's parents, during the campaign of 1965 by portraying themselves as the JFK and Jacqueline of the Philippines. An image they continued to pursue afterward with no small help from the American press, which called them that—the king and queen of the Philippine Camelot—when they went to visit the United States the following year.

GMA is an unelected President, and a largely unpopular one. The unpopularity owes to the comparison with Corazon Aquino, the other beneficiary of people power. Cory led the fight against Marcos, GMA avoided the fight against Erap. Unlike the other post-1986 presidents, GMA never enjoyed a "honeymoon period" with the public. No small thanks to herself: from the start, she showed devotion not to running government but to running a campaign for a second term. She would say much later, specifically last week, that she hasn't used government funds to campaign, she has used government funds only to govern. She doesn't know the distinction.

But there the differences end and the parallels begin. It became clear in the course of Marcos' first term that he wasn't going to give up power and would get reelected by any means. No other post-war Filipino president had gotten a second term. His bid for it turned the 1969 elections into the bloodiest elections up to that time, comparable, as several observers said, to the period of La Violencia in Colombia, a reign of terror marked by brutal killings. He did get reelected. The irony of it was that he never really needed to lie, cheat and steal. He ran against the patsy, Serging Osmeña, who was tainted with collaborating with the Japanese. Stories would fly later about how Marcos himself manipulated the Liberal Party to get Osmeña elected as standard-bearer, knowing he could beat him hands down.

It has been clear in the course of GMA's term that she will not give up power but would get reelected by any means. None of her predecessors has been able to, post-Edsa presidents being allowed only one term. Her bid for it is turning the 2004 elections into the dirtiest elections since 1986. The bloodletting has so far been wreaked largely with political, financial and legal weapons. It may not remain so for very long.

Like Marcos in 1969, GMA is pulling no stops to get a second term, some of her tactics being breathtakingly brazen. I myself thought her decision to run anyway after vowing not to on Jose Rizal's grave was a career-breaker, but I did not count on the public having gotten so cynical it would take lying to be par for the course. A thing that has encouraged Miriam Defensor-Santiago to do exactly the same thing, vowing on the coffin of her dead son she would not run again but doing so anyway. That alone showed there was no limit to how far the current occupant of Malacañang would stoop to remain there.

And this is the part that scares the hell out of me. GMA has acted with this degree of unscrupulousness without a popular mandate, carrying with her only the seal of approval of the Supreme Court. Instead of being true to the thing that brought her to power, which was Edsa II, she has scorned it, courting the favor of its very enemies. What would happen if by chance and more frenzied application of lying, cheating and stealing, she should get a second crack at power?

Almost immediately after Marcos won a second term in 1969, it became patent he would not be content with it. The First Quarter Storm broke a couple of months later (elections were held in November then), during the first three months of 1970, and among the things that presaged it was Edgar Jopson and company challenging Marcos in Malacañang to put down in writing that he would step down at the end of his term. The whole of Marcos' second term was marked by monumental lying, cheating and stealing, capped by his declaring martial law a year before his second term ended.

The appetite for power shown not just by GMA but by the people around her, not least the former activists and NGO leaders, who have shown the most dazzling inventiveness only in justifying the unjustifiable, or their own petty claims to turf, does raise terrifying questions about the future of democracy in this country. I personally cannot see GMA giving up power peaceably at the end of a second term any more than I can see her giving up power peaceably at the end of her first. There is a qualification to the aphorism that history repeats itself for those who do not heed it. That is that history happens first as tragedy and second as farce.

I am scared of an FPJ presidency. But I am scared even more of a GMA one.

No 'amici' of the people

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AFTER THAT marathon hearing at the Supreme Court last Thursday, where the petitioners, FPJ's lawyers and the four "amici curiae" appointed by the Court gave their respective positions, the nation awaits its decision. The three groups were asked to submit their respective memoranda today, and a decision on FPJ's case may be expected by the end of this week or early next week. The Supreme Court is being urged by various citizens' groups to render its decision as early as possible to restore calm and enable the nation to go about electing its highest leader.

* * *

I have heard it said by some quarters that the four *amici curiae* were perhaps "friendly" to FPJ and to the high court, but they don't look like friends of the people since they left them more confused than enlightened with their liberal interpretation of the nature and rights of illegitimate offsprings. Some observers complain that the *amici curiae* went to great lengths to opine that illegitimate children follow the citizenship of the father, but afterwards left the issue of FPJ's eligibility to run dependent on whether he can prove that he was recognized by his father, who has been dead since the '60s—a task lawyers admit could be difficult.

* * *

Those issues are best left to the lawyers to debate. What's evident is that if FPJ's citizenship is upheld, it means a battle royale between him and President Macapagal-Arroyo, with Raul Roco and Panfilo Lacson becoming marginalized. It's easy to foresee that a number of Roco supporters would gravitate to GMA if only to prevent an FPJ disaster, and this includes politicians currently critical of GMA. But it's also true that if FPJ is upheld, many Lacson votes would be diverted to him as the opposition consolidates. It's foreseeable Lacson would yield to FPJ out of pragmatism and pressure from Erap, but would Roco do likewise for GMA?

* * *

The Supreme Court hearing on the FPJ citizenship issue is touted as the longest oral argument entertained by the Court, but this is not entirely correct. In the early months of martial law, the constitutionality of the ratification of the 1973 Marcos Constitution was challenged by a band of intrepid lawyers who defied Marcos' general order forbidding any contest in court of his martial law edicts. The petitioners, which included then prisoners Ninoy Aquino and Jose Diokno, claimed that the Marcos Constitution was not validly ratified because the plebiscite was conducted through the raising of hands in the barangays; the Comelec simply counted the hands.

* * *

The Supreme Court hearing presided by Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion lasted one full week, with morning and afternoon sessions and 35 hours spent in the oral argument alone. Lorenzo Tañada, Soc Rodrigo, Jovito Salonga and Sedfrey Ordoñez, alongside younger lawyers such as Joker Arroyo, Francis Garchitorena and Raul Gonzalez, argued in a scholarly display of high court argumentation. To Marcos, the ratification case was more important than the challenge to martial law, because the former would entrench and "constitutionalize" his dictatorship. The Metrocom frightened people not to show up.

The tragedy is that such important historical events are not known because our history books have not been updated.

* * *

Former Senator and Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez formally launched his bid as an independent senatorial candidate in Quezon City recently. He chose to run for the Senate, after he was left out of the K-4 senatorial ticket which had chosen opposition figures identified with Erap, such as Miriam Defensor-Santiago and John Osmeña, over him. But instead of joining any other political group, despite invitations to do so, Alvarez chose to run as an independent. It is a principled move, but also a smart one as he's drawing plenty of support and sympathy from his Lakas party mates, as well as other political groups eager to "adopt" him. These include various Liberal Party leaders, the PDSP of Norberto Gonzalez, the Jesus is Lord movement and Bayan Muna. Alvarez is also getting strong support from various NGO groups such as the religious, youth, transport, farmers, fisherfolk and women's sectors. But his problems are how to get his votes counted and where to get the funding.

* * *

Running as a maverick, however, has been characteristic of this former freedom fighter. He began his political career over 33 years ago as a young constitutional convention delegate who refused to sign the Marcos Constitution in 1973, choosing instead to exile himself in the United States to continue the struggle against the dictatorship. Today he's running outside of the K-4 coalition, but Alvarez is in that odd position of being able to play conscience to his party and the administration.

For instance, he has issued an appeal to the President to fully restore Department Administrative Order 17, which he issued as environment secretary in 2002 to keep out the big commercial fishing operators from the municipal coastal waters, so as to give the small fisherfolk a chance to earn a better livelihood. His DENR successor, Elisea Gozun, disgustingly revoked DAO 17 while her confirmation still hang in the Commission on Appointments; recently she issued a watered-down version to satisfy the clamor from the fisherfolk, but they have only gotten more restive about it. On the other hand, GMA recently issued Circular 55 requiring all government agencies and corporations to use coconut methyl ester (CME) in their diesel vehicles. Alvarez lauded GMA, for he had authored the Clean Air Act in the Senate, which had recommended the use of this clean fuel as the best substitute for petroleum diesel. GMA's circular is a vindication of his coco-diesel project at the DENR.

The Mindanao peace gambit

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

AS expected, the barnstorming presidential candidates who visited the various cities and provinces of Mindanao these past weeks are prompted to say an obligatory piece or two on the current state of the quest for peace in the "land of promise." All are in agreement that the achievement of peace and development of Mindanao is crucial to the survival of the country. Yet, judging from the varying approaches espoused by these candidates, one wonders what their real peace agenda is, not only for Mindanao but for the country as a whole.

So, what do these candidates have to say on the search for peace in Mindanao? Here are some of the presidential candidates' take on the issue:

Fernando Poe Jr., who visited Davao before the official campaign started, gave his now becoming classic snippets: "Hopefully we can solve peace and order. Hopefully, we can give peace *sa inyong lahat*."

Said during an ambush interview, FPJ's answer was a great disappointment for reporters who wanted to get a more elaborate response on the complexities of the issue.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, on the other hand, true to his "iron-clad" image, echoed the previous position of his patron, former President Estrada: "The rule of law and territorial integrity is non-negotiable." And, if the MILF "insists on violating the law, if they insist on seceding from the country, then there is no other choice but to go for an all-out war," he was quoted by the Davao-based news agency, Mindanews.

Former Education Secretary Raul Roco, meanwhile, offered moderation to Lacson's view by advocating "openness" in the negotiations between the government and the guerrilla groups. "Always keep the peace talks open and let the people in Mindanao think for themselves (what is good for them). The principle is that Mindanaoans know better than Malacañang."

Roco claimed he wanted greater autonomy for local government units, saying that a decentralization of the Manila-centered power is better for Mindanao.

Just as moderate as Roco's is the stand of evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, the only candidate who attended a Feb. 8 forum with peace advocates in Davao City. "No single member of the Filipino people will be a victim of injustice," he said.

He then criticized the high-handed solution to the armed conflict and vowed not to tolerate militarization and injustice.

Injustice, he claimed, was one major reason that drove him to join the radical Kabataang Makabayan in the '70s in Bulacan.

What about President Macapagal-Arroyo? Upon her assumption to power, President Macapagal vowed an "all-out" peace policy ostensibly to counter the "all-out war" policy of her ousted predecessor, particularly against the MILF. But not long after, that "all-out peace" policy has been reversed, particularly after 9/11 and her administration joined the "war on global terrorism."

On record, the Macapagal administration is hurrying up the final peace accord for both the communist-led National Democratic Front and the MILF, preferably before the elections. Even if it looks improbable at this point, yet, if indeed one will be forged, it is obviously sought as a premium prize to the reelection bid of the President. Recently, the Macapagal administration is also advocating federalism as one form to address the MILF rebellion.

However, while talks with the NDF have resumed, the administration's two-pronged approach to peace negotiations with the MILF—formal and back-channeling—is at a standstill. The formal resumption of talks between the two panels is yet to take place despite months of pronouncements to that effect. This, despite the so-called "breakthroughs" achieved early this month in Davao City by the GRP-MILF Joint Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), like the setting up of a joint interim action team that will address potential armed confrontations by both parties while a ceasefire is still in place.

As in the past elections, Mindanao is a major, if not a decisive, battleground for all candidates. Mindanao's votes, while not monolithic, can make or unmake a candidate, a president especially. Notwithstanding this fact, very glaring, however, is the lack of specifics by these candidates on how to clearly spur peace and development that for decades has eluded the "land of promise."

These general, if not vague, positions by the presidential candidates will probably solely determine the trajectory of the quest for peace not only in Mindanao, but, also in the rest of the country. Yet, something must be done. Aside from forcing these candidates to take the road of platforms and issue-based electoral campaigns, this is one opportune time that the peace question must be at the center of the electoral agenda of all parties. To do this, there is thus a need for various peace and civil society groups, not only in Mindanao, but elsewhere, to effectively expand their reach. The question of "peace and war" should be made a major election issue, not only for the presidential candidates but for all candidates down to the local level.

Many may take the current election as one big "That's Entertainment" show but for those who have suffered, war is no entertainment at all.

Short of this, it is not surprising then, if the majority of the electorate will just sit idly, bewitched by the political entertainment offered by the current election frenzy.

* * *

Comments to karlos_z23@hotmail.com and kar_laws@yahoo.com

To be born free

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

MY father used to say he envied my cousins and me, because we were born free Filipinos. To him, it was a marvelous thing, a proud thing. I myself envy those old enough to remember what life was like before martial law; but I envy those born after 1986 the most. To have been born and raised in a free country, and have no memories of what it is like to live under a dictatorship, is a marvelous thing.

One of my earliest memories is of the curfew sirens. Childhood was a constant tug of war between the propaganda of the New Society in school, where in Grade 1 we were all obliged to bring home and sell Green Revolution raffle tickets, and listening to my father rant about the same tickets. Every year, the school would embark on an "English speaking campaign," and when I'd brag about the points our homeroom racked up, my father would furiously retort he wasn't interested in raising a member of the Hitler Youth—one of my first lessons in history, because then I had to look up who the Hitler Youth were and found out they used to snitch on their neighbors and parents. Life was all about warnings—be careful what you say over the telephone, be just as careful when talking to people you don't know—and all about precautions the warning entailed.

Television after school was an odd (though in retrospect, perhaps fitting) combination of Loony Tunes cartoons and Ronnie Nathanielsz singing the praises of the conjugal dictatorship. In school we were taught that President and Mrs. Marcos had saved the country; at home I'd hear about people being arrested or under surveillance, and of chief justices holding up the first lady's umbrella.

When I was 8 years old, the interim Batasang Pambansa elections were held. It was the year of the noise barrage, something I didn't quite understand, but which was definitely such a big deal as to be dangerously exciting even to a small boy. I recall a mimeographed manifesto ending up in the hospital room in which I'd been confined for pneumonia; of the grownups speaking in excited whispers. And then nothing but year after tiresome year, during which colonels continued to be elected to head PTAs, and something called Light A Fire which made going to Ali Mall dangerous, and deprived Nonoy Zuñiga of one of his legs.

Everything changed in 1983. We had just moved to the States in that year, and it was in Washington, D.C. that we heard the news that Ninoy—a man I'd never heard of until then, oddly enough—had been killed. When we'd come home for the summer, I'd voraciously read bound copies of Mr. & Ms., and watch betamax tapes of the Japanese coverage of Ninoy's assassination. There was the Parliament of the Streets, stories of Lorenzo Tañada and Chino Roces being knocked down by water cannon; you heard Forbes Park matrons discussing the best way to distribute sandwiches at rallies, and of communists and businessmen finding common cause against Marcos.

I will never forget New Year's Eve, when 1985 gave way to 1986. The government had sternly warned people not to explode firecrackers, and yet I cannot recall a night when so many firecrackers were defiantly exploded. It was like being in a war movie, and I remember telling myself, "Marcos will lose." We were in the United States when that happened; the day began with a jolt when American classmates rushed into my room yelling, "he's gone!" Marcos had fled. A school assembly was held, and the priests offered up a prayer for the Philippines; and afterwards, the school secretary came up to me with a note: "your father called to say that your country is free again." Afterwards my father told me he attended a thanksgiving Mass for the Filipino community, and when the national anthem was played, he was in tears. How the whole world admired us then.

Life was not all roses after Edsa. But things were improving; the economy was growing by leaps and bounds—but the growth was cut short by the coup attempt of 1987, and the economy made comatose by the coup of 1989. In our selective memories, we dwell too often on the disappointments since Edsa and not enough on the military adventurism that really set the country back.

Time and again I tell people younger than myself that they shouldn't focus on the politicians who troop to the Edsa shrine year after year. Edsa was about a nation making a decision, absolving itself of the complicity it had in accepting the dictatorship in the first place. We wouldn't have had a dictatorship if the people hadn't supported it, in the beginning, regardless of what the military or the Americans would have liked. Marcos didn't last very long when his people finally rejected him. And the disappointments since Edsa are as much the fault of a public willing to leave things in the hands of the politicians as it was the result of military meddling.

But it is the absence of an all-pervasive feeling of fear, that we should appreciate the most. We have only felt real fear in recent years when the military, backbone of martial law, tried to impose itself on us, or when politicians try to use the tactics of the parliament of the streets and of Edsa in support of their thoroughly selfish interests. In both cases the fear is, mercifully, short-lived, because the efforts of putschists and politicos always fail, because they only really have the lust for power as their motive force—nothing great enough to make you want to cry tears of joy when your national anthem is sung.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Campaign coverage

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

MAXIMUM media publicity is the name of the game for candidates for national offices. Handshakes, speeches, motorcades and rallies can accomplish only so much. The aspirants have to rely principally on media to make the voters remember them on May 10.

The manner by which the INQUIRER reported on the activities of presidential candidates several days ago caught the attention of reader Alexander Francisco. Using the Feb. 11 issue of the newspaper as reference point, he observed that "of the four news reports that appeared on the front page, only one reporter each reported on the campaign sorties of Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Fernando Poe Jr.

"Two reporters covered former Education Secretary Raul Roco. But there were so many reporters who wrote about the activities of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Is PDI supporting any presidential candidate? I believe media should be neutral or objective in reporting on the campaign."

The newspaper issue mentioned by the reader came out the day after the campaign for national positions officially started. With a "Lights, camera, action" banner emblazoned on its orange-tinted front page, the INQUIRER reported the opening salvos of the four candidates mentioned by the reader.

The front page had a four-tier (one on top of the other) look. The top portion, or right below the headline, showed a photo of Poe's kick-off rally at the Cuneta Astrodome. Beside it was a reporter's account of the event's glitzy atmosphere and Poe's simplification of the country's problems to "breakfast, lunch and dinner."

Other candidates

The second tier of the front page carried the story on the President's barnstorming in Laguna, with a picture showing her and her entire slate hearing Mass. The report's byline was that of a reporter and the INQUIRER's Southern Luzon Bureau.

Lacson occupied the third horizontal column of the page. He was shown riding an open-roof car in his home province of Cavite in the company of a 1,000-vehicle motorcade. The accompanying news, which was written by one reporter, described his plan to eradicate graft and corruption in government if he is elected president.

At the fourth tier of the page was a photo of Roco and party mates marching toward Villa San Miguel in Mandaluyong City to attend a concelebrated Mass. Two reporters combined their efforts to come up with the story on how Roco and the members of his slate went the rounds of a university, a wet market and a shopping mall to mark the first day of the campaign period.

The Second Front Page of the same issue had the photo of Poe, which occupied almost one-third of the page, in a fiery speech during his proclamation rally. Below him was a one-fourth size photo of the President waving from her car to the crowd that greeted her in Cavinti, Laguna.

Missing bets

Responding to the question raised by the reader, the managing editor explained that the newspaper did not (and has no intention to) play favorites among the presidential wannabes in the coming elections. He pointed out that two reporters each are assigned to cover Ms Macapagal, Poe and Roco, while only one reporter is tasked with reporting on Lacson's activities.

The reason for the "singular" assignment for Lacson is he only has Rep. Carlos Padilla, who is running for the Senate, in his team. The other presidential candidates have vice-presidential and senatorial hopefuls in their respective tickets, hence, the need for an extra reporter to monitor the goings-on in their campaign sorties.

If that's the case, I asked, why were Bro. Eddie Villanueva and Eddie Gil nowhere on the front page of the Feb. 11 issue? The editor replied that the day before Villanueva decided not to follow the campaign tradition of politicians. He opted to take a rest and spend some time in prayer. This action merited a small news item in the newspaper's Second Front Page in the same edition.

With regard to Gil, he was forced to cool his heels inside a hotel in Iligan City to stave off the filing of a complaint for failure to pay his hotel bills and the transportation expenses incurred by his handlers. Under these circumstances, the editorial staff decided to devote the entire front page to the first-day activities of the four candidates earlier mentioned.

In the course of the discussion, I learned that the newspaper's Southern Luzon Bureau became part of the byline on the story on the President's campaign drive in different towns of Laguna because that area is within the scope of reportorial responsibility of that bureau.

Since the bureau reporters filed their own account of the President's activities, in addition to that submitted by the assigned reporter, it was only fair that their contribution was acknowledged in the byline of the news report. For the rest of the candidates, only the names of the reporters who filed a report were indicated.

Evaluation

I think the insinuation that the INQUIRER gave preferential treatment to the President does not stand on solid ground. The perceived more extensive coverage of her activities was called for by the situation, as I have earlier explained.

If there was such a tilt in her favor, the editorial staff could have placed her photo and the accompanying news at the top of the front page and put those of Poe elsewhere.

The prime location on the page can be justified by her standing in government. She is the incumbent President and therefore entitled to all the courtesies that are due to the highest official of the land. Regardless of who occupies the Office of the President, he or she is representative of the Filipino people.

I anticipate that as the campaign heats up I will get letters from the readers complaining about the "unfair treatment" of their favorite candidates. This is par for the course in the newspaper world because, as the saying goes, "you cannot please everybody." Somewhere, somehow, there will always be a candidate who will think that he or she is entitled to better treatment that the others.

That's how the cookie crumbles during election time. And there is nothing the newspaper can do but grin and bear it.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Enough of show-biz extravaganza in politics

SIX years ago, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines came out with a "Pastoral Exhortation on Philippine Politics," succinctly noting that "Philippine politics—the way it is practiced—has been the most hurtful of us as a people" as well as "the most pernicious obstacle to our achieving full human development." Focusing on the election process, it pointed out that "it is at election time that the worst flaws of our political system and culture glaringly show themselves in their most degrading forms."

Already unfolding before us is practically a replay of what the CBCP observed six years gone by: "The campaign period turns the Philippine scene into a mad circus, a vast entertainment plaza. Candidates will, during this period, do whatever their audience bids them to do—in sharp contrast to their deafness to the same people's cries for attention once they are in office. They will dance, clown, kick-box, sing, use gutter language—anything to sell themselves and heighten 'name recall.'

"In short, they do everything except educate the electorate on issues. They hire expensive advertising agencies to polish up their image, often without regard to the truth, and to produce sound-bites and one-liners that will go over well in political rallies and quick interviews on radio and television. Dirty tricks, black propaganda, mudslinging—anything to weaken or destroy the opposition—these are liberally resorted to. In short, the laws of ordinary morality are suspended during the campaign period in favor of office-seekers and their supporters. Winning at any cost and by any means—this has become the paramount principle governing candidates and parties in their election bid."

What does it take to change all of these? Only one vote—but multiplied a millionfold. We can start by stopping solicitations for every conceivable project from candidates who will be pressured to give and thus equally pressured in turn to seek or accept contributions from vested interests that expect a return after the elections. We can refrain from participating/attending any activity that worsens further our personality-oriented brand of politics. We can stop undeserved victories by voting "NO" to undeserving candidates on election day even as we join monitoring citizens' groups of election day activities. We have to stop turning the campaign period into a vast entertainment extravaganza.

—FR. BRIGGS ODTOHAN, SVD,
coordinator,
Justice, Peace and Integrity
of Creation, 0534 D. Jakosalem St.,
Cebu City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Give Macabud the blessings of electricity and the PNP

LAST June 2003, we wrote about the miserable conditions in Macabud, Rodriguez, Rizal, a barrio located at the back of La Mesa Dam which is only a 15-minute drive from Payatas, Quezon City. At that time, Macabud was only accessible half of the year because there was no all-weather road, and benighted throughout the year because there is no electricity.

Today we are happy to report that Macabud is now accessible all year round because an all-weather gravel road has been constructed. However, feeder roads that should connect the many far-flung farmlands are still unconnected by the most rudimentary roads.

Despite the missionary costs that Meralco has been collecting, electricity has yet to come to Macabud. This is difficult to understand and accept because the immediate farming communities to the north in Bulacan are enjoying the benefits of electrical connections. A feeling of being abandoned has recently engulfed Macabud residents because of a press release from Malacañang that declared that President Macapagal-Arroyo "switches on the lights for electrification of 175 remote and off-grid barangays in Mindanao."

Coupled with its being in darkness, the residents also continuously live in fear, for this barangay whose territory covers more than 1,500 hectares, does not have a single Philippine National Police outpost. This absence of police authorities is probably the main reason why crimes against property and unsolved killings are deemed very much higher than the provincial or national average.

A lot of hype and media hoopla are being done for the protection, rehabilitation and reforestation of La Mesa Dam and its watershed areas. We feel that this hype and attention be brought to the immediate areas outside their boundaries in Macabud. Even if surrounded by a concrete wall, the dam and its watershed can never be safe and protected if conditions of lawlessness exist in its immediate vicinity.

—PIO C. FORTUNO,
78 Visayas Ave., Quezon City

Media's role in the education of the masses

WE often blame the poor quality of our country's leaders on unintelligent voting by the masses. But I think that the media, by omission or commission, have helped shape an unthinking electorate. A lot of Filipinos are not able to go to school or finish schooling for lack of financial resources. But while they cannot afford schooling, most of them have access to newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and movies.

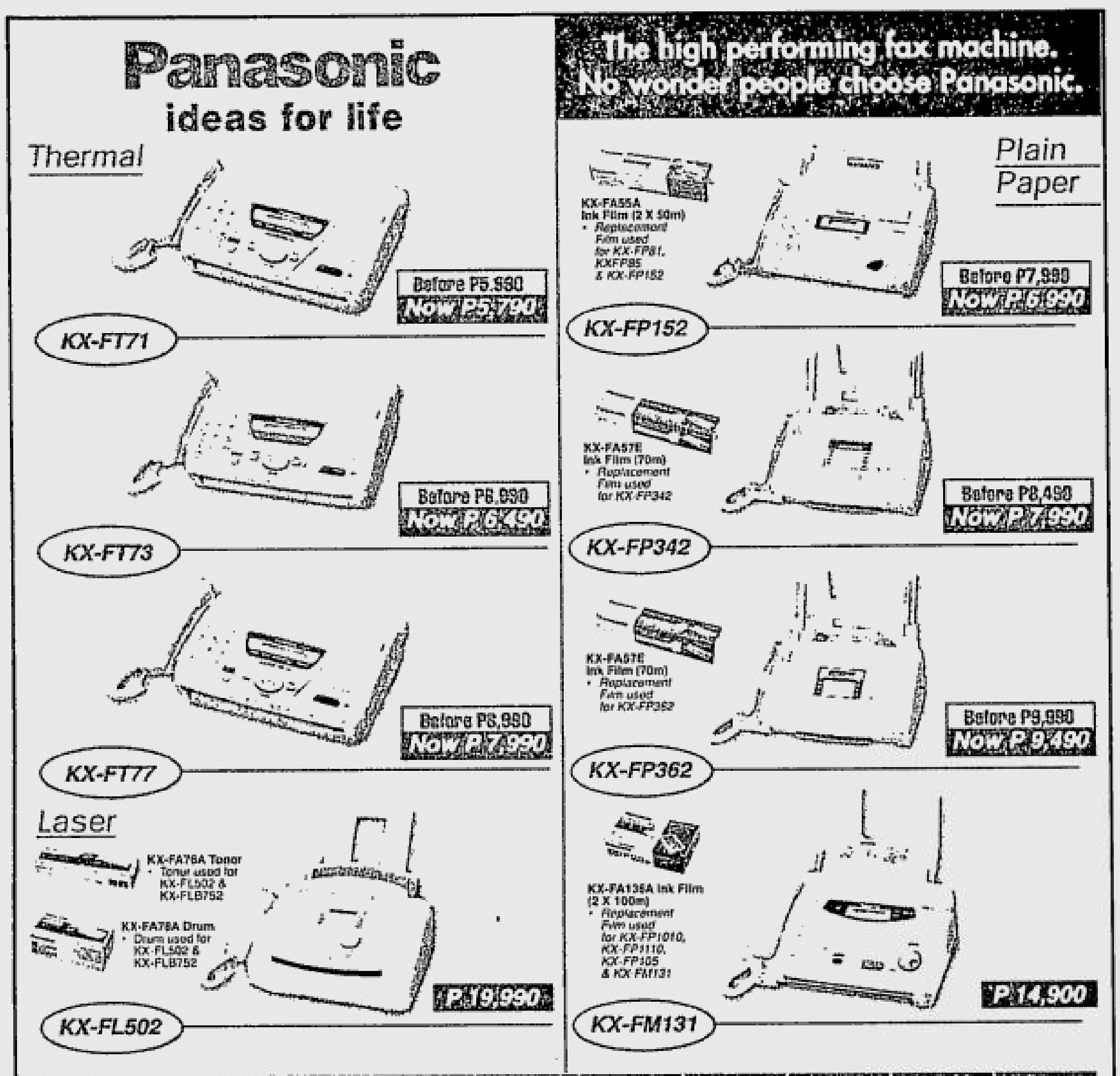
The masses may not have the opportunity to go to school, but the media have the opportunity to educate them.

Unfortunately, instead of seizing this opportunity, the media feed them nothing but show-biz gossip and sexy dancers in noontime variety shows. Fed on a daily intellectual diet of show-biz gossip and sexy dancers, how can the masses attain the minimum intellectual sophistication required for a meaningful participation in democracy?

Often, the excuse the media give is, "It's what the public wants." To which I counter, "It's because it's all you give them." Besides, the crass taste of the people is not an excuse not to give them something better. Should a mother raise her children on soft drinks and chips preferred by them, instead of rice, vegetables and meat?

I appeal to media professionals: please wield your God-given talents to help educate the citizenry. While your entertainment function is no less important than your educational and informative function, please give the masses entertainment worthy of thinking human beings.

—CRISTINA A. MONTES,
camontes_dragon2001@yahoo.com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Thousands bury slain rights lawyer

LUCENA CITY—Militant groups raised their clenched fists and resolved to continue the fight she left behind, as common folk cried during a four-hour funeral march that turned into a protest rally for the late human rights lawyer Juvy Magsino.

"What pervaded in the air was a mixed feeling of rage due to wasted opportunity for the kind of public servant like Attorney Magsino to truly serve her people," Irein Cuasay, Karapatan-Southern Tagalog spokesperson, told the INQUIRER over the phone after she described the burial of the former Naujan vice mayor in her own town in Oriental Mindoro on Friday.

Cuasay said the funeral left the Magsino house in Barangay Adrialuna at past 7 a.m. When it reached the spot where Magsino and Leima Fortu were fired upon on Feb. 13, the funeral became a long protest march.

Flowers

The truck, decked with flowers, displayed a big streamer with Magsino's photo and printed on it were her words, "It's good to die serving the people."

The houses along the route also had placards and posters calling for justice for her and condemnation of the senseless murders, according to Cuasay.

When the marchers reached the Army's 204th Infantry Brigade in Barangay Pinagsabangan, they saw a blue sack hanging at the gate of its headquarters, that said "Yes to justice, no to accusation," according to Cyrus Alanis, staff of Bayan Muna.

It took the estimated 3,000 marchers at least four hours under intermittent rains to reach the Naujan town gymnasium, the venue for the necrological rites and "Luksang Parangal" for the late Naujan official and chair of Bayan Muna-Oriental Mindoro chapter.

Local officials, friends and colleagues took turns in heaping praises for the slain lawyer.

Absent during the rite was Naujan Mayor Norberto Mendoza, according to Cuasay.

After the Mass in the Naujan Catholic Church, Magsino's remains were buried in the municipal cemetery at around 4 p.m.

Safety

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, who led the activists from Manila and other parts of Southern Tagalog who attended the burial, said his organization would assess the situation in Mindoro to safeguard the safety of mass activists in the island.

"But definitely, we will continue to stay in Mindoro," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

In a letter dated Feb. 17 to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Ocampo called for the withdrawal of the Army's 204th Infantry Brigade to "lift the reign of terror in the province and pave the way for a thorough investigation of the Magsino-Fortu murders and all other human rights violation cases, including those of our slain members."

Ocampo said the House committee on civil, political and human rights has released on Friday its report that said that the 204th IB and its former chief Col. Jovito Palparan could not escape responsibility for the alleged violence being committed against civilians by government soldiers in Mindoro.

"It also ordered the freezing of Palparan's promotion. But it is now moot and academic when he got the nod of the Commission on Appointments," Ocampo said.

Vice presidential candidate Sen. Loren Legarda, during her visit to Magsino's wake last Wednesday, also called for a thorough investigation of the killings. But she did not categorically call for the military's pullout from Mindoro.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Gubernatorial bet defends Lakas campaign kitty

MATI, Davao Oriental—The ruling Lakas party has earmarked about P3 million in campaign fund for each of its provincial chapters.

Lakas gubernatorial candidate for Davao Oriental Thelma Almario said the amount would be divided among party members to support their candidacy and that of their national candidates.

Almario said this only proves that the party's campaign chest would not reach P5 billion as President Macapagal-Arroyo's rivals had earlier alleged.

"The money given to party members is only P3 million for every province. And that we have to divide that amount among ourselves especially that Lakas has so many candidates in the provinces," she said.

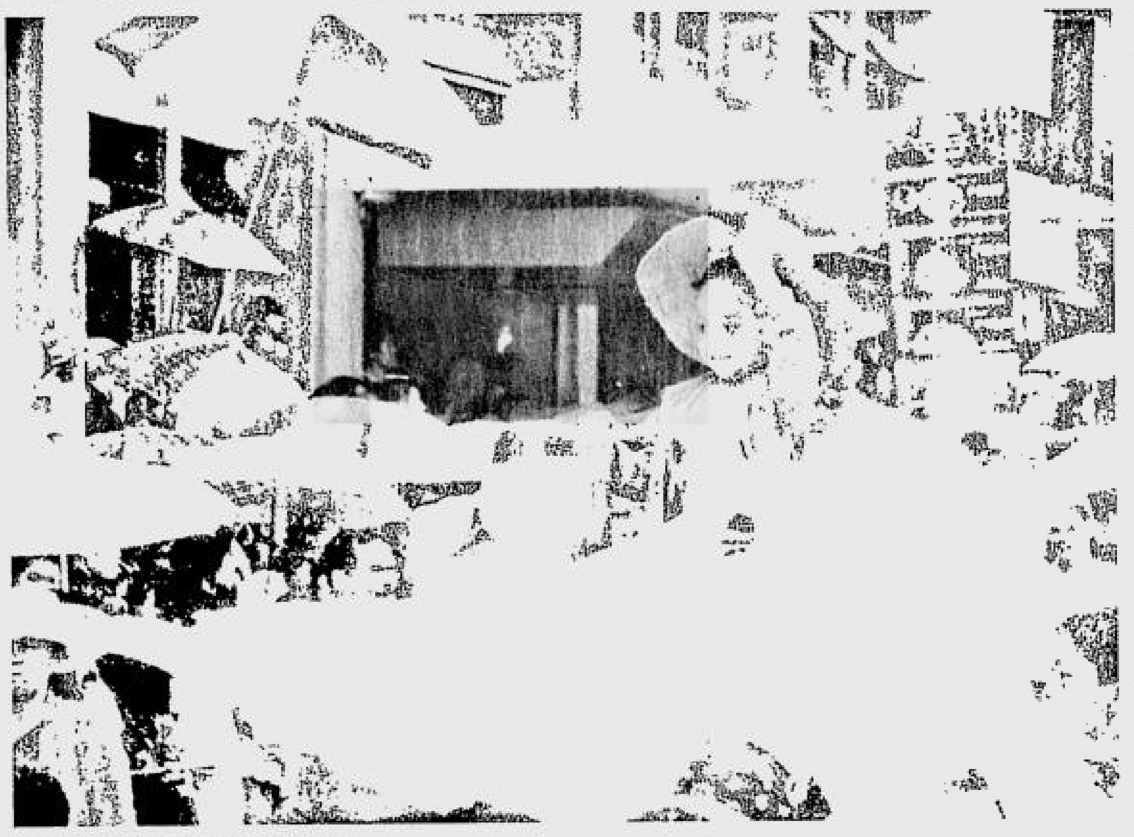
Almario is running against incumbent Gov. Ma. Elena Palma Gil, who is also a Lakas stalwart.

"It's not true that Lakas has a big budget for this election," she said.

Meanwhile, Almario said the influence of local Lakas stalwarts could not predict Ms Macapagal's victory over her rivals, including actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"No we could not assure that. I don't think the people will vote for national candidates just because we endorsed them," she said.

Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau



TOOTS SOBERANO

PANAGBENGA SHOWERS
Heavy rains did not dampen the enthusiasm of the crowd and Panagbenga parade participants like this child atop a float that passed Session Road in Baguio City.

Hog raisers hit gov't meat import plan

LIPA CITY—Local swine raisers have attacked the plan of meat processors to import meat again, saying this would spread the dreaded foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) that nearly wiped out the industry ten years ago.

The swine raisers belonging to the Agricultural Sector Alliance of the Philippines (ASAP) and the National Federation of Hogfarmers Inc. (NFHI) made their criticism after the meat processors declared their need to import meat again on grounds of what they defined as meat shortage.

ASAP president Nick Briones, who also chairs the Limcoma Cooperative in this city, said the importation comes in the "guise" of providing cheap protein source to Filipino consumers.

Briones claimed that the meat processors who want to import meat again are just advocating the importation of carabao meat from India, where FMD is endemic, and anthrax and other pests are known occurrences.

Risk

"Is it worth risking the health of Filipinos just so importers can feed their insatiable appetite for profit? Carabeef from India is unsafe. There is no zone in that country that has been classified as FMD-free by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE)," he said.

Briones, who is also one of the council presidents of the NFHI, said carabao meat from India is allowed in the Philippines for exclusive use of meat processors.

"They pass this off as beef in their corned beef and other canned beef products. But the greed of meat importers does not stop there. They want carabao meat in the wet market," Briones added, "They want to rake in profits at the risk of the consumers' health and at the risk of contaminating the local livestock industry with FMD."

If the government approves the importation, it would sabotage the government's program of attaining an FMD-free status by June of this year, he said.

"I hope the GMA administration would realize that the hog industry has over 7.3 million direct and indirect dependents who are also registered voters," he said.

Decline

ASAP studies in 2003 showed that backyard hog raisers supply 77 percent of the local hog supply in the country. For the past two years, the industry has been suffering from a deep decline, the lowest in history as it happened for two consecutive years, following massive meat importation and smuggling.

Imported buffalo meat from FMD-infested India was even passed off as beef in the local wet markets with lower price and competes with the local beef and pork, bringing the total loss of the swine-raising industry to a whooping P19.2 billion in the past two years.

The local swine raisers were only able to breathe a sigh of relief in December last year and in January, when the sale of the local meat picked up.

But only last week, meat processors urged the government to import again. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Mayor's aide slain

CABANATUAN CITY—A security aide of the mayor of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija, was killed while two others were wounded when they were attacked by a local official and his father on Wednesday night. Danilo Lorenzo, 45, succumbed to three bullet wounds. His two companions, Nelia Valdez, 43, and Bobby Ibasto, 25, were hit by stray bullets when the suspects shot Lorenzo in their house at Barangay Bantug in Carranglan at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. Reports said the suspects attacked Lorenzo after an argument about politics.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Picket fracas

CALUMPIT, Bulacan—Mayor Ramon Pagdanganan was accused of punching two men in a picket line in Barangay Pungo here on Tuesday. Reports said Pagdanganan allegedly hit Niño Reyes, a worker of the construction firm Freyssinet Pilipinas Inc., and Pablo Lacsamana, manager of Lax Manpower Agency, when the mayor confronted 20 terminated workers who were staging the picket. Pagdanganan said he went to the picket line to ask the workers to stop the assembly and abide by the company's rules. The mayor said he was provoked into punching Reyes, his godson, when the latter appeared inattentive while he was talking to the workers. He said he hit Reyes to teach him a lesson. Pagdanganan, however, denied that he hit Lacsamana.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Missing truck

BAGUIO CITY—A truck carrying more than P274,000 worth of grocery items was stolen while it was parked along a street in Barangay Upper Rock Quarry here on Feb. 14. Police said the Isuzu Elf truck, owned by the Assets Marketing Corp., was discovered missing on the morning of Feb. 14. Manuel Perez Jr., a sales representative of the company, said he parked the truck on the street near his house in Upper Quarry at about 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 13. He said he discovered that the truck was missing at 7:30 a.m. the following day. ***Aisa Santos, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Inmates flee

DUMAGUETE CITY—Two male inmates escaped dawn Thursday from the Negros Oriental jail in this city. Jail warden Jeffrey Araula identified the two escapees as Jaime Amaro, who is facing charges of robbery with murder involving the May 8, 2002 payroll holdup in Sta. Catalina town where four municipal employees were killed; and Neil Cariño, who is also facing charges of robbery with murder in Pamplona town. Araula said the inmates escaped by cutting a hole through the wooden ceiling and GI sheet roof. The escape was believed to have happened between 2-4 a.m. Thursday but was discovered only at 5 a.m., when the guards served coffee to the inmates.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Nueva Vizcaya voters get taste of KNP 'entertainment'

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—They did not have to bring along singers, dancers and comedians, but their "fans" went home entertained just the same.

Residents of Nueva Vizcaya on Friday got a taste of the kind of "entertainment" that candidates of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino have to offer, in the aspirants' effort to get the support of local voters.

The KNP, led by actor Fernando Poe Jr., tickled the audience with double-meaning jokes and movie one-liners during a rally here on Friday, drawing mixed reactions from the crowd of 10,000.

Political analysts earlier urged candidates to raise the level of discourse in the campaign and educate voters on national issues.

They also asked candidates to talk about their platforms, instead of providing entertainment through songs, dance numbers and jokes.

In Friday's rally, Poe, struggling from a bout with cough, turned to his bag of screen dialogues and movie titles to draw the loudest cheers from the audience.

He said he had been repeatedly asked why he had to join the presidential race knowing that in the country, politics was "*magulo* (chaotic)."

"*Ang sabi ko sa kanila, kahit butas ng karayom papasukin ko kung para sa bayan*" (I told them that I am willing to go through the eye of a needle if this would benefit the people)," he said.

"*Kahit anong paninira ginawa na nila sa 'kin, tinitiis lang natin. Hintayin ninyo, pagdating sa dulo, kapag puno na ang salop, kakalusin natin* (My opponents have done everything to destroy me, but I'm just enduring it. But when it's too much, we'll move)," Poe told the crowd at the old capitol plaza in Barangay Don Domingo Maddela here.

He closed his speech: "*Hintayin ninyo, dahil pagdating sa dulo, lilipad ang lawin* (Just wait, because in the end, the hawk will fly)."

Vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda sang the Carpenters' "I Won't Last a Day Without You" to entertain the crowd.

Former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who took charge as the group's spokesperson and introduced each senatorial candidate in Ilocano, at one point, focused on the machismo of fellow candidate Alfredo Lim.

"*Haan laeng nga nalaing pumupog iti ngato; mas nalalaing pay nga pumupog iti baba* (He's not only good at pounding on the upper parts; he's even better at pounding on the lower portions)," said Enrile, drawing cheers and laughter from the crowd.

He later presented and kissed Jamby Madrigal on the cheek, and boasted: "Kitan yo man, bisbisongek latta isudan (Look at how casually I could kiss them)."

When it was her turn to speak, Madrigal called Enrile "my boyfriend."

Lim, as he began his speech, gave a flirting remark to Solano Councilor Maybelle Dumlao, the rally's emcee.

"*Pag nakikita ko si* Maybelle, *naaalala ko* (Whenever I see Maybelle, I remember) 60 years ago. *Sana naligawan kita noon* (I should have courted you back then)," said Lim.

Lim was later described by fellow senatorial aspirant Boots Anson-Roa as having an "F4 look," alluding to the members of the popular Taiwanese boy band.

Roa, for the most part of her speech, cited her association with Poe, as "his leading lady in about 10 movies." Poe later referring to Roa as "my leading lady."

Poe presented former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada as "*ang aking inaanak* (my godson)."

Sporting on his right wrist the trademark orange wristband of his father, jailed president Joseph Estrada, Jinggoy joked about how he was often mistaken as Poe, and branded as "ugly."

"*Pangit man akong tingnan, masarap naman ako kung titikman* (I may be ugly to look at, but I am delicious)," the young Estrada said.

Even former Sen. Ernesto Herrera had to ride the bandwagon to tickle the crowd, explaining how he was unhampered by polio.

"*Ang* polio, *mula tuhod pababa. Pero magmula tuhod pataas, walang* polio (The effect of polio is from the knees downward. But from the knees up, polio has no effect)," said Herrera. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

K4 bets say political noise prompting peso plunge

BAGUIO CITY—The senatorial candidates of the administration party's K4 coalition acknowledged on Saturday that the peso's erratic plunge was due to "political noise."

Former Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas III said the "noise" emanates from the opposition, whose supporters have declared that they distrust the Supreme Court's handling of the citizenship case of actor Fernando Poe Jr.

But former Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago could not resist adding a bit of her own noise.

Roxas, Santiago and other K4 candidates met reporters here before they joined the opening parade of the 9th Baguio Flower Festival or Panagbenga on Saturday afternoon.

Santiago took potshots at presidential candidates Poe and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, saying the 2004 elections should be a barometer for a leader, who has the best experience in governance and the training to handle the country's economic crisis.

Santiago, who sported a neck brace during a K4 press conference here, said the voters should have an easy choice between "an actor, and a high school dropout" and a "doctor of economics."

"In my dealings with financial experts, it had been determined that the peso is failing because of political uncertainty," Roxas told reporters.

"If certain people will ignore a Supreme Court decision (on the nature of Poe's citizenship) and anarchy ensues, that would be the reason (for) uncertainty."

Roxas said businesses have been expecting the worst since Poe's supporters marched to the streets last week.

Roxas said the solution to the peso crash is simple respect for the country's institutions. *Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Malice prevails over reason in shelving of bill in Senate

From page A1

Aquino administration), Emil Javier (under the Ramos administration) and Nemenzo (under the Estrada administration).

The three presidents sought to develop the institution not just as a state university but as the Philippine university with academic standards of excellence competitive with those of national universities in the region.

Reflecting the UP community frustrations over the virtual killing of the educational reform bill, Nemenzo blasted the Senate's inaction in an angry report to the community. The report condemned the shelving as "the triumph of malice over reason."

Nemenzo's diatribes marked the reentry of UP into the arena of debate on issues over the quality of Philippine politics. His report snaps the university from a period of steering away from controversial issues that exercised the nation during the Estrada administration.

It bristled with strong words, recalling Nemenzo's firebrand politics as a political dissident who earned him the intense animosity of the Marcos dictatorship before and during the martial law years.

The UP community will certainly welcome Nemenzo's return to the center of political contention as it will rouse its members into political involvement. He seized the high ground on behalf of a cause directly affecting the university's role in shaping the intellectual life and agenda of the nation.

NEMENZO

OSMEÑA

Osmeña to blame

Although Nemenzo singled out Senator Osmeña for blame, he also castigated the "ineffectual leadership" of the Senate, ironically headed by the university's "most distinguished alumnus," Senate President Franklin Drilon. Nemenzo reported: "When the Senate adjourned last Feb. 6, we saw eight years of intensive lobbying for a new UP Charter gone to waste. It was not the opposition of a loud minority that brought this about, but the masterful filibustering of a single senator and the ineffectual Senate leadership. Politicking of the most despicable type shelved what could have been the legislature's singular gift to the University of the Philippines. Malice triumphed over reason."

In order to make UP responsive to the needs and realities of the time and allow it to compete successfully with the region's best, the bill sought the government's formal recognition of the institution as the national university of the Philippines to set it apart from more than a hundred other state universities and colleges.

The bill sought to put UP, recognized as one of the 50 world's best universities, on the same standing as the University of Tokyo, the National University of Singapore and the Australian National University.

With the government's recognition that it is the national university, UP can be freed from the constraints of the Salary Standardization Law, allowing its professors to receive salaries competitive to those received by academics in leading private universities.

A full UP professor receives only a third of the salary of his counterpart at De La Salle University. This reform is the most significant proposal of the bill.

Low salaries have driven UP academics to take up well-paying consultancies, causing the depletion of academic staff and neglect of research, the core of a university's academic development.

The proposed new charter seeks to democratize the Board of Regents through the inclusion of a regent representing the non-teaching staff.

The charter seeks authority to develop and use some of the UP resources (it has 25,000 hectares of land) and allows the use of proceeds from development of these resources to fund programs and projects. This would give the university financial autonomy and make it less dependent on the national budget. The UP budget has been suffering cuts, through which vindictive legislators have retaliated against the university.

Nemenzo reported that the campaign to pass SB 2587 in the 12th Congress (the House passed it unanimously) had failed. The Senate adjourned its session "without passing the bill (certified as urgent by the administration) or even bringing it to a vote," he said.

Great sadness

"I say this with great sadness," Nemenzo said, "as I had hoped that a new UP Charter would have been one of my administration's worthiest legacies to university. But I must also express my anger and dismay over the cavalier manner by which our bill was doomed to die on the Senate floor, largely on account of one senator's utterly unreasonable objections and demands."

"We had the vote," Nemenzo said. There were nine UP alumni in the Senate, and senators from the administration and opposition sides expressed support for the bill. Even so, neither Drilon nor Sen. Edgardo Angara, a former UP president, saved the bill from Osmeña's filibuster.

Nemenzo said the sponsorship effort of Sen. Francis Pangilinan was "consistently thwarted" by Osmeña, "who would either suddenly disappear when it was his turn to interpellate, or otherwise make outrageous demands or claims."

He derided Osmeña's claim that the university "has become a rich man's school." The claim had been shown to be untrue during hearings on the bill.

According to Nemenzo, more galling was the fact that Osmeña poured scorn on him, resurrecting an old issue that he was a "communist." He said Osmeña had vowed to make the university pay for "demonizing" him during the debates on the military bases more than a decade ago.

Osmeña blamed Nemenzo's relatives in Cebu for his political woes. The senator had also sought the resignation of Nemenzo.

Nemenzo said he was "more deeply disappointed by the abject failure of the Senate leadership to exercise its legal and moral prerogatives to bring the matter to a vote."

"The Senate leadership," he said, "allowed valuable time to slip away until it was too late. What triumphed in the end was malice, misinformation and petty politicking. I realize that the Senate had many other important bills to consider and that its agenda was upset by such distractions as the Jose Pidal exposé and the Oakwood mutiny."

Nemenzo called on the the UP community to push the campaign for a new charter with the wider objective of mobilizing their resources "for the emergence of more responsible lawmakers and leaders who can truly help UP and Philippine education."

In addition to being taken held hostage to the messy politics of the Senate deadlocked by a fragile balance of power, the UP bill was a victim of a larger malaise. The proposed measure was caught in the current of anti-intellectualism in politics, which shun the educated class as a recruitment field for the presidency.

Who's facing whom in presidential debate?

From page A1

dent Macapagal-Arroyo in a "serious debate," not a show biz-type forum.

This after Raul Roco issued a challenge for Ms Macapagal and Poe to face him in a presidential debate, which the actor promptly pooh-poohed but accepted later, with conditions—and which Panfilo Lacson took up yesterday without an invitation, but with enthusiasm.

So who's facing whom?

The President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Macapagal had "shown her readiness" for a debate, but "it should be … a serious one."

Housing Secretary Michael Defensor, campaign spokesperson for the President, told Poe not to be "too sure about Tondo," where the actor said the debate should be held.

"If they are only after … a cheering squad, I caution Mr. Fernando Poe," Defensor told reporters during the K-4 campaign in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija.

He said Poe's bosom buddy, ousted President Joseph Estrada, had planned to sell Tondo's Baseco compound to private shipbuilding companies—which would have displaced 10,000 poor families.

"The President voided the contracts and proclaimed Baseco a housing project," Defensor said. "He (Poe) might be surprised to discover where Tondo residents' sentiments lie."

Ms Macapagal would face her opponents "anytime, anywhere," Defensor said.

"Anytime, anywhere" was also Lacson's response to Roco's challenge, no matter that it had been not addressed to him.

"Inside an air-conditioned studio or outdoors—it won't matter to me who the audience is," Lacson said in an interview over radio dzMM.

While other candidates may dismiss a debate as a waste of time, Lacson said, he believed it was important as it would give the people a glimpse of every presidential candidate's political agenda and platform of government.

There has been no word on the issue from Bro. Eddie Villanueva and Eddie Gil. They could be planning their own one-on-one, away from this free-for-all.

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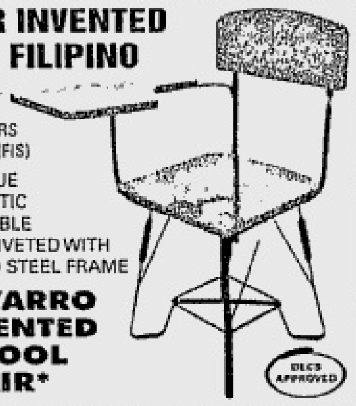

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Stalwarts of Edsa take different paths

From page A1

didate for the Batasang Pambansa, and won. At about the same time, Saguisag had gained a reputation for fearless human rights lawyering.

He became a member of the inner circle of Aquino's widow Cory. After the dictator Ferdinand Marcos fled the country on Feb. 25, 1986, Saguisag found himself playing, literally, a revolutionary role. "I put together Proclamation No. 1, where I said we were taking power in the name of the people. We went revolutionary, because we junked the Constitution of Mr. Marcos."

It has been a long 18 years since those heady days.

For many, the mental picture they retain of Mercado is a three-year-old image: an impassive defense secretary, wearing black, surrounded by generals who had just withdrawn support from President Joseph Estrada. In that Jan. 19, 2001 news conference, Mercado looked like a soldier out of uniform: ill at ease, unsure of himself.

But that day was unusual; usually, Mercado is happy to be where the action is.

To borrow a famous phrase from the American political dictionary, Mercado is a "happy warrior." He relishes the attack and counterattack of politics. In the InqTV interview, which was conducted mostly in Filipino, his eyes light up when he talks of policy-crafting or lawmaking.

"I enjoy policy work," he said. "That's my advantage. I really enjoy reading, studying, and debating the law. That to me is happiness."

Saguisag is Mercado's complete opposite: He was a reluctant politician. "I never saw myself in public life really," he says.

In 1987, despite his great reluctance, he ran for the Senate as one of "Cory's Candidates." Like Mercado, who was one of the first politicians to do commercial endorsements, he won a five-year term.

"In Metro Manila, the only one who beat me was Mr. Pepsodent himself, Orly Mercado," he said in his InqTV interview, which was also largely in Filipino. "Like I said, in 1987, there was no money politics. I won without spending a single centavo of my own." [He does not forbear to point out that, at the end of his campaign, he returned a P1-million donation from his wife's boss. "We did not know that, as Jose Pidal said, you could keep it."]

Unlike Mercado, who was reelected to the Senate in 1992, Saguisag refused to run for public office again, despite "a high risk of winning."

Unlike Saguisag, Mercado was an early rider on the Estrada presidential express. He served as campaign manager in 1998, and was appointed secretary of defense that same year.

Estrada's aborted impeachment trial, however, put Mercado in a quandary. When the institutional processes he says he had supported broke down, the issue was joined. "It was not easy for me to leave Erap. He was a friend. But as I said in Edsa II, some things are more important than friendship."

Today, Mercado says he leaves it up to history to judge his controversial decision. He knows the personal consequences can be severe. "It's a decision that I've paid for. I lost the last elections, I think, largely because of that decision."

Saguisag says he had taken a neutral stance during the impeachment, because he had friends on both sides. But when Estrada, ousted from Malacañang, asked him to be his counsel, he also went through a bout of soul-searching.

"I prayed over this. I got President Cory Aquino to go with me to the Pink Sisters. She didn't give me advice. All she said was, 'Let's pray there together and then you decide on your own.' When he finally decided, it was in favor of 'someone who was no longer in power, who was the one being kicked now.'"

"The former overdog became the underdog, and that's the story of my life," Saguisag says, smiling.

A paradox

It is possible to argue that Saguisag has held true to his original convictions, and that it is Mercado who had shifted with the political winds, having actually campaigned for the pro-Marcos Estrada and served in his Cabinet. And yet that argument leads to a paradox: Why did Saguisag's straight line bring him from one side of Edsa I to the other side of Edsa II, while Mercado's zigzagging landed him on the same side of both People Power uprisings?

One possible explanation: The journey these two political players and others like them took since February 1986 has brought the country, not full circle, but right back to the start. Only, this time, on the other side—like a Mobius strip.

In the InqTV interview, the irrepressible Saguisag asks: "As to whether we squandered Edsa, well, not to blame anybody, but where are we now?"

INTERVIEWS for InqTV were conducted by segment producer Macy Bautista; TV reporter Christine Ong wrote the script.

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Ikaw, ano'ng gimik mo sa February 25?

photo / charles altomonte

Sa ika-18 Anibersaryo ng People Power, gunitain natin ang tunay na diwa nito: ang pagpapabuti ng kalagayan ng bayan sa pamamagitan ng sama-samang pagkilos ng mga mamamayan.

Gandang isipin,'di ba?
At lalong magandang aksyunan!

Isantabi muna natin ang sariling interes at ilaan ang ating sarili --- magvolunteer ng oras, pawis, talento, kakayahan at puso --- sa iba't ibang projects na isasagawa sa araw na ito, para sa ikabubuti ng mga kapwa nating Pilipino at ng sambayanang minamahal.

Mahaba ang listahan ng pangangailangan ng bayan; napakaraming paraan upang ikaw ay makatulong. Sa bawat eskwela, parish, village, o barangay, siguradong may listahang tulad nito. Mag-usisa at mag-sign up! Everyone is welcome, maging bata man o matanda. You can also join as co-workers in a corporation.

Feb.25 ---
gawin nating Araw ng Pagserbisyo.
Araw ng Pagbahagi.
Araw ng Karangalan para sa ating lahat.
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People Pawis Day Activities

Feb. 22

People Power Lakbayan Kontra Droga
4 pm, PICC Open Field
Youth/multi-sector rally

Celebration of Mass
4 pm, Montalban

Feb. 22 - 25

People Power Bayanihan Tungo sa Kalusugan / Ligtas Tigdas
Immunization drive led by DOH-CHD in densely populated communities in 17 cities and municipalities.
718-3098 for details

People Power para sa Kalusugan
Immunization / Heart Card Program led by Merck, Sharp & Dohme / Makati Health Dept.
878-6338 for details

People Power Clean-up & Waste Management
Information campaign / seedling distribution / clean up.
929-6626 for details

School-based Community Assistance Program
DepEd / CHED

Social Welfare Services
Care for elderly and children at risk, led by DSWD

Youth Build
Construction of houses for marginalized communities led by Habitat for Humanity.
0917 833-7504 for details

Feb. 23

Ilawan ang Demokrasya Concert
4:30 pm, Bantayog ng mga Bayani, QC

Feb. 24

A.R.U.G.A. sa Kabataan
8 am, Parañaque
Shelter for maltreated children, led by Rotary Club of Parañaque Metro

Bulilit Power for Peace Tourism
10 am - 3 pm, Parañaque
Training of grade school children led by FOCI / Feed the Children Phils.

Celebration of Vigil Mass
5:15 pm EDSA Shrine

Procession / Barrio Fiesta
6:30 pm EDSA Shrine

Feb. 25

Wreath-laying Ceremony
6:30 am, Libingan ng mga Bayani

Flag-raising Ceremony & Floral Offering
7:30 am, People Power Monument

People Power sa Halalan
8 -11:30 am, La Salle Greenhills
> Voter's education / pledge for honest & peaceful elections led by NAMFREL / PPCIV
> Young Voters' Caravan led by Youth Alliance Phils.
> People Pawis Fair Volunteers' sign-up led by People Power People Movement

People Power Over Poverty
> Gawad Kalinga "Rising from the Ashes" - 8 am -3pm, BASECO
> Gawad Kalinga "Rising from the Garbage" / Konsiyerto sa Paradise Mountain - 3-8 pm, Smokey Mountain

Celebration of Holy Mass
12:15 pm, EDSA Shrine

Jesus Revolution Convergence Launching
8 am - 8 pm, Cuneta Astrodome

40-Day National Prayer & Fasting for Peaceful & Credible Elections
Launch in all communities / municipalities led by Catholic Protestant Evangelical & Muslim Congregation

Other year-round People Pawis cooperators: DILG / Soroptomists International / Chino Roces Foundation / Kalampagin ang Konsyensyang Kinakalawang Unang Lingap-Kapwa Foundation / MAP International / Children International / Spirit of EDSA Foundation / Kilos-Bayan / PhilHealth / CCI Asia

EDSA People Power Commission

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Poe doubts own copy of birth certificate

From page A1

had to apply for a new one.]

Poe's comments on the authenticity of his birth certificate came following reports that the PAGC had threatened to file contempt charges against him if he refused to submit his birth and baptismal certificates, as well as his marriage contract and license with actress Susan Roces, the marriage contract between his father Allan Poe and Paulita Gomez, and the marriage contract between his father and his mother Bessie Kelly.

The commission needs the documents as part of its investigation of ex-National Archives Director Ricardo Manapat, who has been charged with falsification of public documents before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Manapat has been accused of falsifying documents allegedly to make it appear that Poe was not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

Poe's birth certificate and his parents' marriage certificate that the actor's lawyer Estelito Mendoza submitted to the Commission on Elections showed that Poe was born on Aug. 20, 1939, that his mother was an American citizen, and that his parents were married on Sept. 6, 1940.

The Supreme Court is hearing petitions seeking to disqualify Poe from the presidential race on the ground that he is not a natural-born Filipino because he is an illegitimate child and an American.

Poe's lawyers have questioned the PAGC's power to subpoena witnesses and to charge with contempt those who refuse to submit documents.

Poe, standard-bearer of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, told reporters though that he would like to comply with the PAGC request. But first he wanted to find out whether his copy of his birth certificate was authentic.

"*Kasi gusto kong malaman iyong birth certificate ko kung nagalaw din iyon* (Because I want to know whether my birth certificate had also been tampered with)," he said.

Poe was referring to the case involving Manapat whom a Senate committee had concluded to be behind the falsification of documents against him to make it appear that he was not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

Poe said he wanted to find out whether his birth certificate was in order to "at least comply with what (the PAGC) wanted."

He said he also wanted the Supreme Court to immediately decide on the disqualification petition against him.

"*Para hindi naman tayo nakabitin lahat* (So that things are not left hanging)," he said.

Poe's personal campaign manager, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, said the birth certificate now in the actor's possession and which he submitted to the high court and the Comelec came from the Civil Registry in Manila.

"*Kopya lang eto* (This is just a copy)," he said.

Sotto said Poe was "nervous" because what he submitted (to the Supreme Court and the Comelec) might have been doctored and he could be blamed for it.

Sotto said the PAGC should be the one asking the Civil Registry in Manila for a copy of Poe's birth certificate, instead of Poe producing a copy.

"It's not FPJ who is under trial but Manapat," the senator said.

On the alleged discrepancies in Poe's birth certificate, Sotto said it was possible that the Civil Registry had made an honest mistake or the birth certificate had been tampered with.

"Definitely, we did not have anything to do with it and definitely we will not allow this to be tampered with," he said.

Movie in the US

Sotto scoffed at the claims of some quarters that Poe's birth certificate was fake because of questionable entries like the room number of the hospital where the actor was born. [The actor was reportedly born in Room 1015 of St. Luke's Hospital. At the time, the hospital was said to be a 25-bed, one-story structure.]

Birth certificates do not indicate the room numbers of hospitals, according to Sotto. He said he had yet to see one that did.

Sotto said Poe had to apply for a passport last year because the first passport the actor acquired 40 years ago had been lost.

Poe first traveled abroad—to Europe and the United States—in 1963 to do a movie with Joseph Estrada, according to Sotto. The title of the movie escaped Sotto, but he could be referring to "Los Palikeros," a movie filmed in Hawaii, Hollywood, Las Vegas and New York.

"He (Poe) could not locate his first passport so he was asked to apply for a new one," Sotto said.

With a report from Jerome Aning

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JV softens up on Atienza, hits WPD

By Luige del Puerto
and Tarra Quismundo

A PHONE call by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza to San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito aborted a brewing rift between the two local chief executives.

After mounting a scathing attack on Atienza, Ejercito softened up yesterday and said he was no longer angry with the Manila mayor.

Ejercito said Atienza had called him to assure him that his group, PMP-Youth-Batang Pinoy Para kay FPJ, would be allowed to hold a campaign sortie in the country's capital city.

"We talked," Ejercito said in a phone interview, adding, "I am no longer angry with him."

Ejercito, a son of deposed president Joseph Estrada, and Atienza, a staunch supporter of the San Juan mayor's father, have been known to be allies.

Atienza said he called Ejercito last Saturday after the San Juan mayor criticized him for "deliberately" preventing the opposition from conducting rallies in Manila.

"I explained that they could not hold rallies in areas around the Supreme Court, but are free to do so anywhere else in the city," said Atienza.

He described their conversation as a long talk between friends.

"He was very cordial and understanding," the Manila mayor said.

Ejercito is a son of deposed president Joseph Estrada, whom Atienza supported before his fall from power. Atienza is now supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Yesterday, Ejercito shifted his criticism to the Western Police District, which he said could be the one trying to block his group from holding a rally in Manila.

US retiree arrested in Manila

By Tarra Quismundo

THE POLICE in Manila have arrested a 65-year-old American retiree after an 8-year-old girl complained that he had molested her inside his room in Malate on Friday.

Investigators identified the American as Robert Richards, from Los Angeles, California, who is currently billeted at the Hobbit House at 1801 Mabini Street.

According to the police, the girl and her mother sought the help of the Western Police District General Assignment Section on Friday against Richards.

The victim told the police that a certain Liza Tagle introduced her to Richards at dawn on Feb. 15, at the Plaza Rajah Sulayman in Malate, where she and her mother were doing business.

Hotdog and bread

Tagle reportedly told her that Richards would give her food if she went with them.

The girl went with them to the room of Richards, where she was served hotdog and bread.

While she was in the room, however, Richards allegedly touched her private parts three times.

She was brought home after the incident.

That night, however, the girl felt a headache and pain in her private part. She also vomited every time she ate.

Richards is now detained at the WPD-GAS, after he was charged with child abuse before the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

During investigation, police found several x-rated video compact discs in Richards' room at the Hobbit House.

METROBRIEFS

'Swan' owner cries foul

THE OWNER of the vessel seeking to carry and transport ammonia in bulk has decried recent reports "unfairly" tagging his ship a "floating bomb." Tomas Tan, owner of the Golden Swan, said that his ship was fully equipped with all the safety facilities and equipment and has complied with all the safety standards to carry and transport liquefied ammonia in bulk. He added that in the report submitted by the technical team authorized by the Maritime Industry Authority, it was resolved that the Golden Swan could safely carry liquefied ammonia in bulk in its existing pressurized bullet tanks. He added that contrary to news reports, Marina administrator Oscar Sevilla never rendered a decision "not to grant a certificate to the vessel after an ocular inspection." *Margaux Ortiz*

Short cut, cuts life short

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD Richard Leonardo decided to take a shorter way to get to his house around 4:30 a.m. yesterday. Leonardo, a laborer, lived inside the Philippine National Railways compound on the corner of Dagupan extension and Tayuman Street in Tondo, Manila. His alternate route meant climbing a concrete wall that fenced the compound from the street. But when Leonardo got up the wall, he accidentally touched a live wire, which sent him falling onto a jeepney. The fall and the electric shock killed Leonardo. *Tarra Quismundo*

BF wants no rally on Edsa

IF METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando will have his way, no portion of Edsa will be closed for the People Power Revolution anniversary on Wednesday. Fernando is asking the People Power Commission to modify its plan involving the temporary closure of a portion of the main thoroughfare. "Edsa should not be closed for any reason because this will cause major traffic jams in Metro Manila," Fernando said. *Margaux Ortiz*

2 killed in QC car crash

TWO MEN were killed, while two others were injured after their car rammed into a traffic light post along Araneta Avenue, Quezon City yesterday. Grande Ong, 32, and John Beltran, 33, were killed, while the driver, Arvin Eringco, 27, and Grover Ong were rushed to the hospital. The four were on a Toyota Revo at about 3:30 a.m. when the driver lost control as they were approaching Bayani Street. The van skidded until it rammed into the concrete base of the traffic lights at the intersection. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

3 gunmen slay 2 in UP

TWO MEN were gunned down in Quezon City yesterday by three assailants. Crisaldo Lope, 43, died of a gunshot wound in his chest, while Percival Bolata, 50, died of a gunshot wound in his forehead, the Investigation Unit of the Central Police District reported yesterday. At about 9:30 a.m., Lope and Bolata were walking in an alley in Block 2, Barangay Daang Tubo, University of the Philippines, Diliman, when three men blocked their path and opened fire. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

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By Webmaster Raymond Steinbacher, and the research staff at Green Tree Press, Inc.

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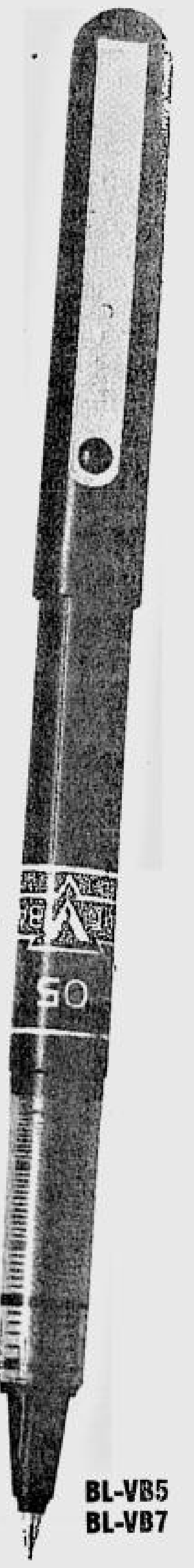

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METRO

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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

MMDA: No permit, no trees

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday reiterated its policy banning people from planting trees and shrubs in public places like roads and sidewalks.

"Let the government do the landscaping of the metropolis. The MMDA has the authority to tell where these trees could be planted," MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in his weekly radio show "MMDA sa GMA."

The MMDA chair said people could only plant trees within their own property.

Fernando noted that certain environmentalist groups had become "so emotional that they forget the issue should be viewed solely on an engineering standpoint."

The MMDA decided to be strict on the planting of trees in public places after a row with an ecology group over trees along Katipunan Avenue.

"We are talking about mobility and roads here, not forests," Fernando stressed. "And again, there is also the question of safety."

Fernando, however, clarified that the MMDA was not against tree-planting.

The MMDA chair disclosed that the agency would even be planting acacia trees along White Plains Road. The trees will be planted three meters from the curb, he said.

"We're doing this for the public and not to please some groups," Fernando stressed, referring to zealous environmentalists who have called him a tree-killer.

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MAST FROM THE PAST
A group of men in a small boat seems amused after checking out a full-sized replica of a seagoing sailing ship that has cast anchor at the Manila Bay. Early explorers went around the world in similar wooden, wind-driven ships.
ERIK ARAZAS

Make police stations respectable, cops told

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

FOLLOWING the scandal created by a group of lawmen who turned a precinct in Quezon into a virtual nightclub, the top police official in Metro Manila told his men to make police stations respectable.

As centers of public service, every police station should be a respectable place, National Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo De Leon told the INQUIRER yesterday.

In a memorandum, the NCRPO instructed its men to observe proper demeanor amid reports that some policemen continue to "turn police stations into beerhouses."

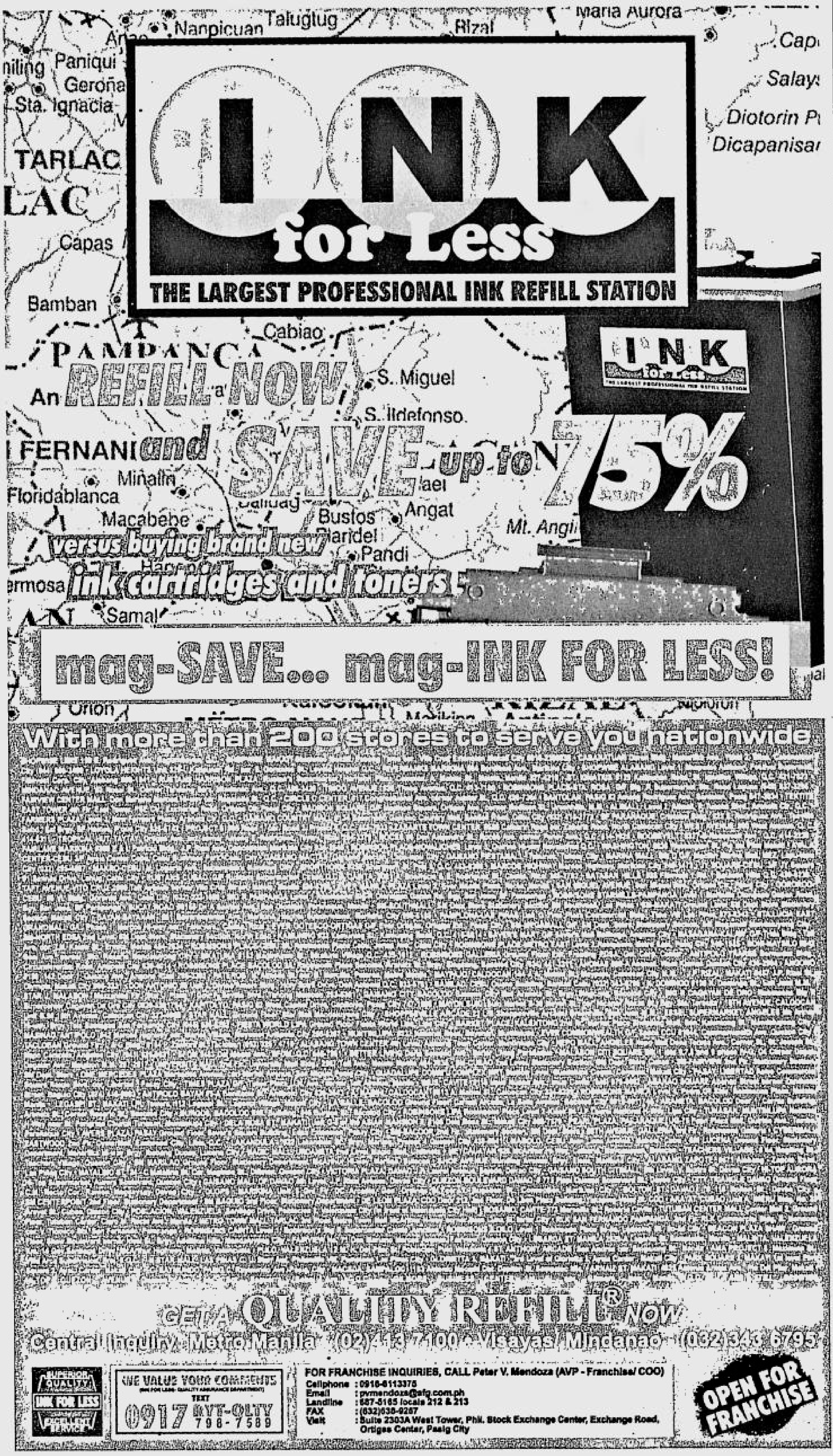
The memorandum also banned posters of naked women and the watching of pornographic movies inside police stations.

The memorandum said that such "malpractices" further damage the already bad image of the Philippine National Police and negate its achievements.

De Leon said policemen who would be found violating these orders would be charged for gross misconduct and face possible dismissal.

Police commanders will be held accountable for violations.

De Leon encouraged residents to report to Patrol 117 offices still adorned with posters of naked women.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BASKETBALL: NBA - Hawks vs Rockets; 9:30 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); Solar Sports; Spurs vs Timberwolves; 7 p.m.; IBC 13 - Atlanta attempts to take flight against Houston while Midwest leaders San Antonio and Minnesota engage in a grudge match.

NBA Greatest Games - Heat vs Knicks, Game 6, 2000 Eastern Semifinals; 12 noon; Solar Sports - Just when it looks like New York was dead, it reached deep down and summoned a dramatic comeback from an 18-point deficit to send the series against Miami to a winner-take-all finale for the fourth straight year.

US NCAA; 6 p.m.; Solar Sports - ACC rivals University of Virginia and North Carolina St. slug it out.

Compiled by L. Mangulat

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Ginebra rips Shell; Alvarez benched

Top rookie 'not ready'

By June Navarro

TV stars Rufa Mae Quinto and Allan K preside over the glitzy start to the 2004 PBA season before action begins (right). AUGUST DELA CRUZ

AMERICAN coach John Moran had a few coaching lapses and Shell paid the price.

Given Moran's shortcomings, the Barangay Ginebra Gin Kings overpowered the visibly fagged out Turbochargers, 90-81, at the start of the PBA Grand Matador Fiesta Conference last night before a jampacked crowd at the Araneta Coliseum.

Moran, who replaced Perry Ronquillo before the season started, left top rookie pick Rich Alvarez riding the bench all game long and Ginebra coach Allan Caidic said that certainly helped the Gin Kings' cause.

Barangay Ginebra's Eric Menk, Romel Adducul and Rosell Ellis exploited Moran's move as they proved unstoppable in the shaded lane, even grabbing several loose balls both on the defensive and offensive ends.

With their combined efforts, the Gin Kings pulled away from 57-all to wrest an 82-70 margin halfway through the final period.

The Turbochargers threatened at 80-84 as Ronald Tubid pumped in five straight points, but Moran immediately took him out of the game.

Games Wednesday
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:45 p.m.—Coca Cola vs. Purefoods
7 p.m.—Red Bull vs Talk 'N Text

Tubid's three-pointer with 1:38 ticks left proved to be the Turbochargers' last field goal as the Ging King finished them off.

"His decision not to field in Alvarez worked to our advantage. He (Moran) was probably thinking that Alvarez wouldn't be able to take the pressure, but it's his prerogative anyway," said Caidic.

While the crowd chanted Alvarez's name midway in the third quarter, Moran simply ignored the call, disappointing the fans of the former Ateneo Blue Eagle no end.

Moran and the Turbochargers made themselves unavailable for the post-game interview by locking themselves in the dugout for almost an hour after the setback.

Shell insiders said Moran deliberately benched the 6-4 Alvarez, citing the need to give the two-time UAAP MVP more time to jell with the team.

"He (Alvarez) has yet to fit into the system of Moran because he's been here at Shell for only two weeks," the source said.

Alvarez delayed his transfer to Shell by playing in the last PBL title series for Fash, which nipped Welcoat in the best-of-five championship series two weeks ago.

Meanwhile, commissioner Noli Eala said the league had slashed its annual budget by at least 25 percent to sustain the PBA's operations for the entire season.

"In line with the reduction of the team and player salary caps, the PBA Commissioner's Office took vital steps to reduce its own budget," said Eala.

From a P120 million budget last year, the Commissioner's Office agreed to a P30-million cut for the 2004 season beginning in October.

Among those which will be drastically affected by the budget slash are the marketing department and the allocation on the salaries and wages of the league's employees.

"We're off to a good start. I hope we could sustain it," said Eala.

Prior to the Shell-Barangay Ginebra opening-day clash, the PBA treated the fans to a two-hour opening ceremony which featured some of the best entertainment figures in the country.

The scores:

GINEBRA 90—Menk 20, Adducul 13, Ellis 13, Caguioa 11, Santos 11, David 7, Seigle 7, Helterbrand 6, Noble 2, Salvacion 0.

SHELL 81—Calaguio 24, Ondera 17, Dela Cruz 14, Ferreria 7, Tubid 6, Sta. Maria 5, Hrabak 4, Bacani 4, Mamaril 0, Jackson 0.

Quarters: 30-20, 44-39, 65-62, 90-81.

Nets tie longest winning record A28

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Pacquiao not worthy of a million purse, says dual champ Marquez

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

PACQUIAO

THE TITLE showdown has yet to be officially sealed but reigning World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation featherweight titlist Juan Manuel Marquez has already started to belittle the credentials of Filipino champion Manny Pacquiao.

In an interview that came out in a Mexican paper yesterday, Marquez described the former IBF superbantam king as "lacking in merits" despite his conquest of Mexican featherweight great Marco Antonio Barrera last November.

Marquez, (42-2, 33 KOs) nicknamed "Dinamita," is the frontrunning candidate to be Pacquiao's May 22 opponent in an HBO card at a soon-to-be-determined venue in the United States.

The southpaw Pacquiao (38-2-1, 30 KOs) is currently in the US with business manager Rod Nazario to finalize the date of the bout and negotiate with HBO's Kerry Davis and promoter Murad Muhammad for no less than a $1 million payday against Marquez.

But Marquez, in an interview with La Opinion's Ramiro Gonzalez, said that Pacquiao's win over Barrera does not give him enough leverage to ask for a purse that is more or equal to what he would be getting.

"The fact is he defeated a Marco Antonio Barrera who was not the shadow of the once great boxer he once was," said Marquez.

He also pointed out that as the fighter with two belts at stake, he should be getting a big chunk of the deal.

"We all know that Barrera went into the fight with various problems that affected him, and if he was 100 percent in good shape, then we would have seen a different outcome," Marquez added.

The boxing world, however, was impressed by Pacquiao's victory. The Filipino ring hero is now ranked by the prestigious Ring Magazine as the world's best featherweight and No. 6 in the mythical pound-for-pound list.

Marquez said that if a fight with Pacquiao does not materialize, he would defend his IBF title against the No. 1 challenger. At present, the IBF's top two challenger slots remain vacant.

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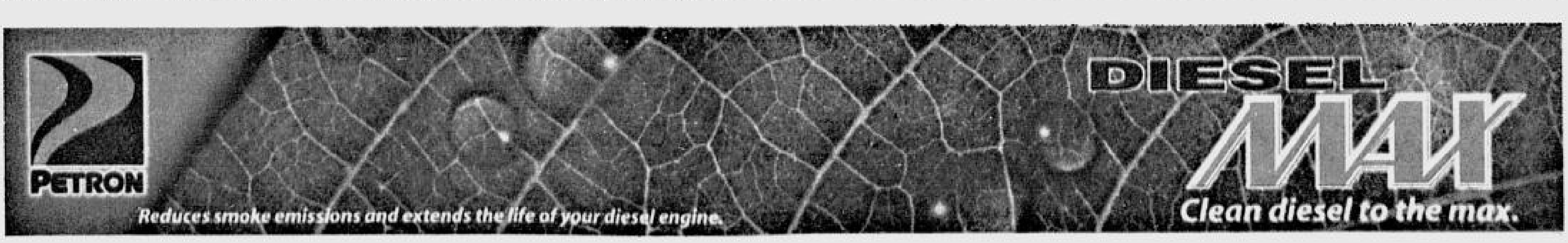
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NCFP relieves Estimo; Abundo takes his post

THE NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines announced yesterday the temporary relief of secretary general Sammy Estimo while it looks into all transactions by the association during Estimo's term.

Treasurer Antonio Marcaida said the NCFP has decided to conduct an investigation of the association's bank accounts based on a recommendation signed last Feb. 20 by NCFP chairman Andy Gatmaitan and approved by six other board members.

Marcaida said the recommendation would be forwarded to NCFP president Mat Defensor "for immediate action."

"An external financial and legal audit will be conducted by [the accounting firm] of Sycip, Gorres and Velayo and presented to the Board at its next monthly meeting on March 13," said Marcaida, who was one of the seven NCFP board members who approved the recommendation.

While the investigation is going on, Marcaida said, the board members also recommended that "[NCFP] secretary general Estimo should be asked to take a leave of absence ... while all his functions, duties and powers, as contained in the NCFP by-laws, shall be temporarily transferred to executive director Casto Abundo."

Besides Gatmaitan, Marcaida and Abundo, the recommendation was approved by Maj. Gen. Arturo Carillo, NCFP vice president; Juanito Calidtaran, auditor; Gene Poliarco, administrative manager; and Reynato Sarmiento, director.

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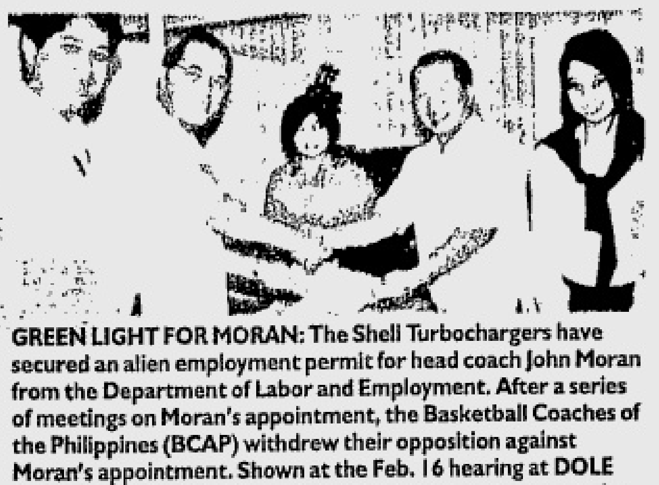

GREEN LIGHT FOR MORAN: The Shell Turbochargers have secured an alien employment permit for head coach John Moran from the Department of Labor and Employment. After a series of meetings on Moran's appointment, the Basketball Coaches of the Philippines (BCAP) withdrew their opposition against Moran's appointment. Shown at the Feb. 16 hearing at DOLE are (from left) lawyer Gilbert V. Santos and Cayetano Gonzales of the BCAP, DOLE mediator-arbiter lawyer Zosima C. Lameyra, Shell's PBA governor and team manager Roberto Kanapi and Shell assistant team manager Vicky Araneta.

Enriquez, Javier top BF Resort golf

MANNY Enriquez emerged the lowest net champion and Emil Javier Jr. outshone all gross scorers in the first BF Resort Village golf tournament held recently at the Philippine Navy Golf Club. The event, which drew more than 90 golfers, was organized to raise funds for the subdivision's medical and dental projects for indigent families in Las Piñas City. The results: Class A—Jimmy Tronqued, champion; Henry del Rosario, runner-up; Class B—Jun Ferido, champion; Julius dela Torre, runner-up; Class C—Rey Punio, champion; Noel Saez, runner-up. RG Cantos, son of BF Resort Village Golfers Association head Col. Jun Cantos, scored a hole-in-one using a Ping Zing 2 sand wedge on the 115-yard Hole No. 16.

NCFP relieves Estimo; Abundo takes his post

THE NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines announced yesterday the temporary relief of secretary general Sammy Estimo while it looks into all transactions by the association during Estimo's term.

Treasurer Antonio Marcaida said the NCFP has decided to conduct an investigation of the association's bank accounts based on a recommendation signed last Feb. 20 by NCFP chairman Andy Gatmaitan and approved by six other board members.

Marcaida said the recommendation would be forwarded to NCFP president Mat Defensor "for immediate action."

"An external financial and legal audit will be conducted by [the accounting firm] of Sycip, Gorres and Velayo and presented to the Board at its next monthly meeting on March 13," said Marcaida, who was one of the seven NCFP board members who approved the recommendation.

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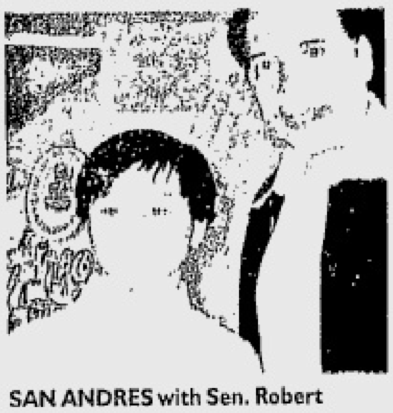

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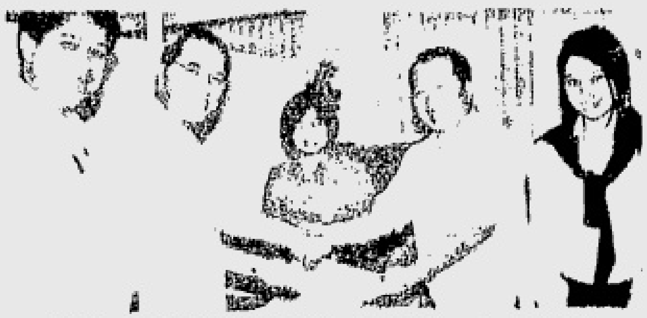
REVTEX wonder boy Kenneth San Andres showed his victory over his older rivals in the first stage was no fluke when he topped both the Novice 125 and Open Production classes of the Philippine National Motocross Championship's second leg recently in Barangay Biday, San Fernando, La Union. San Andres, the dominant force in the Mini-Class for the past years, passed his first tests in the higher divisions with flying colors, but Doubting Thomases were unconvinced. With his dominating wins in La Union, San Andres may have finally put the doubts to rest. The Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines (SCOOP) awardee for junior motocross obliterated his rivals in both divisions via coast-to-coast victories as he strengthened his status as the country's most promising young rider. "It was a no-contest. As soon as the first turn, *naiwan na ni* Kenneth *'yung mga kalaban niya* (Kenneth left all his rivals in his wake)," said his father-coach, Jun-Jun, who himself won the Veterans class. "*Ang sabi ko lang sa kanya* (All I told him was), keep your focus." What made the wins all the more impressive was the fact that San Andres, who is also sponsored by Oakley, Alpine Star, UFO, HJC Helmets, JBS, Accerbis, Renthal, used an 85cc bike to his rivals' 125, 250 and 450cc strong units. San Andres' twin victories completed a sweep for Revtex riders in the motofest hosted by the MCCLU, headed by Mayor Mary Jance C. Ortega, Gov. Victor F. Ortega and Cong. Rep. M. Ortega and organized by the MP Turbo of Mike Potenciano. Completing Revtex's dominance of the second leg, which is also sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association, are the triumphs by Revtex Rocket Glenn Aguilar (Pro Open and 125) and Rodel Cameros (Expert class).

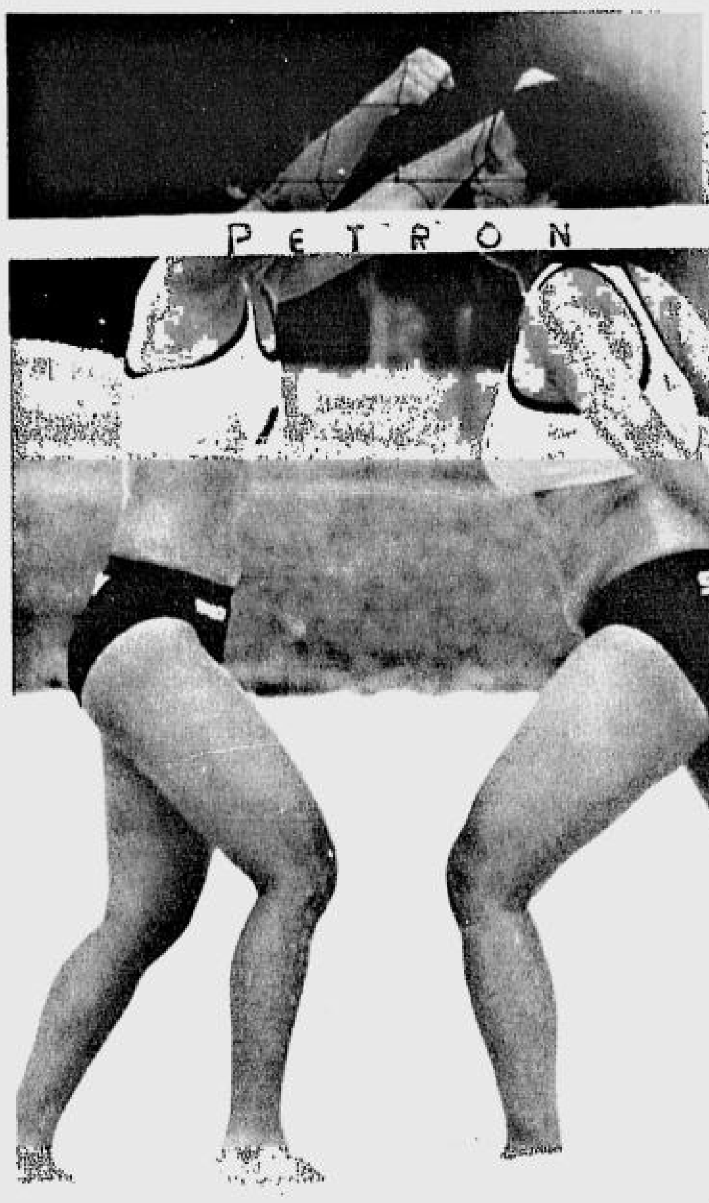


GREEN LIGHT FOR MORAN: The Shell Turbochargers have secured an alien employment permit for head coach John Moran from the Department of Labor and Employment. After a series of meetings on Moran's appointment, the Basketball Coaches of the Philippines (BCAP) withdrew their opposition against Moran's appointment. Shown at the Feb. 16 hearing at DOLE are (from left) lawyer Gilbert V. Santos and Cayetano Gonzales of the BCAP, DOLE mediator-arbiter lawyer Zosima C. Lameyra, Shell's PBA governor and team manager Roberto Kanapi and Shell assistant team manager Vicky Araneta.

Enriquez, Javier top BF Resort golf

MANNY Enriquez emerged the lowest net champion and Emil Javier Jr. outshone all gross scorers in the first BF Resort Village golf tournament held recently at the Philippine Navy Golf Club. The event, which drew more than 90 golfers, was organized to raise funds for the subdivision's medical and dental projects for indigent families in Las Piñas City. The results: Class A—Jimmy Tronqued, champion; Henry del Rosario, runner-up; Class B—Jun Ferido, champion; Julius dela Torre, runner-up; Class C—Rey Punio, champion; Noel Saez, runner-up. RG Cantos, son of BF Resort Village Golfers Association head Col. Jun Cantos, scored a hole-in-one using a Ping Zing 2 sand wedge on the 115-yard Hole No. 16.

Pampanga duo rules Petron beach volley



MANUEL (left) and Macapagal of the University of Assumption-Pampanga celebrate their match-winning point. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

By Trina Ibarle

CLARK FIELD, Pampanga—Layna Macapagal and Mylene Manuel downed Jackie Montefrio and Karla San Diego, 21-18, 22-20, yesterday to rule the first leg of the Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball at the Clearwater Country Club here.

The champion pair from Pampanga finally pulled it off with two service aces by Manuel from 20-all after the University of the Philippines bets had threatened to forge a deciding third set.

The win was worth P10,000 for Macapagal and Manuel, beach volleyball rookies, who leaned on their experience as mainstays of the University of Assumption-Pampanga's volleyball team playing in the WNCAA.

The Pampanga tossers also avenged their 19-21 loss in the eliminations to the Montefrio-San Diego tandem, which ruled Group A with four straight wins.

"*Patay na kung patay maski matalo pa* (We we're ready to die even if we lose)," said Manuel of the final showdown.

Macapagal and Manuel ended the eliminations at second with a 3-1 card and had to win twice over Group B's top finisher for the finals berth.

They did just that, overpowering the petite duo of Roma Jaro and Joyce Realeza of St. Francis of Assisi College, 21-16 and 21-9, to barge into the championship.

Before securing the other finals berth, Montefrio and San Diego were stunned by Group B's Mary Gallano and Sharon Ledesma in the semis, 18-21. They avenged their loss in a 21-8 spanking of Macapagal-Manuel in their second meeting.

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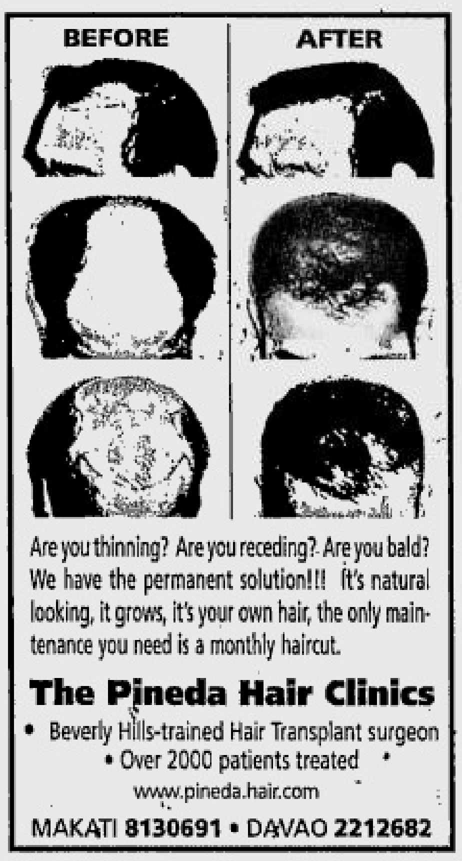
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Courses 'should be tough, but fair'

By Musong R. Castillo, *Contributor*

PALMER, Nicklaus, Trevino and Irwin. Els, Mickleson, Singh and Woods. Fabled names of old and new in the game.

But ever wondered who's been laying out the challenge before them?

Robert Trent Jones Jr. is never mentioned in the same breath as the game's stars, but the 64-year-old stands in a class of his own, having the most respected signature when it comes to designing the courses that test the skills of the legendary pros.

JONES JR.

In a rare interview granted to the INQUIRER on Saturday, Jones cracked jokes, ate a bucketful of fries and talked fervently about his passion that has helped shaped the game of golf around the world.

"What we do now with our courses is to make the better players think and make our holes the fate of the players in every competition," he said.

"At the same time, we want to make them fair and interesting to all classes of players who play the game. Golf, after all, should be relaxing," he said.

Such was the view of Jones, who takes pride in his latest creation, Sta. Lucia Realty's The Summit Point Golf and Residential Estate in Lipa City, which will become the 219th creation of his company worldwide.

Jones yesterday played the final nine of the course, situated in a 220-hectare piece of property 1,100 feet above sea level.

"Every golf course is different, but Summit Point is special," Jones said. "It is also a little unusual because you play around a hill, a summit, and the view is fantastic."

Asked what course from among his creations he likes best, Jones sort of threw back the question: "I like them all. Why, do you have a particular children you like?"

"There are no bad courses, but there are better golf courses," said Jones, who makes it a point to make each design fit the natural landscapes of its location.

One of Jones' first experiences in golf course design came in 1964 when his late father, the great Robert Sr., built the majestic Luisita layout in Tarlac which is still regarded as one of the best in the country.

Seven years later, he decided to put up his own company and went on to become the foremost name in the industry.

The Golf Research Institute in London recently listed Jones as the foremost architect among the world's golf course designers, a field that includes the names of Nicklaus, Player, Faldo, Aoki.

When Robert Trent Jones Jr. puts his hand on a potential creation and inks his signature afterward, one can be sure that what will emerge is an absolute work of art.

"If the course feels beautiful to (players), then we have achieved the highest level in golf designing, and that is golf art," he said.

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Speed O'War outkicks foes in Road to TC opening leg

SPEED O'War (inner rail) gets early pressure from Shock and Awe. JESS YUSON

By Edwin Villanueva

SPEED O'War made himself a strong candidate for this year's series among three-year-old gallopers by ruling the first leg of the Road to Triple Crown Stakes yesterday at the Santa Ana Park.

Though hounded early by Shock and Awe, Speed O'War skillfully completed a wire-to-wire victory in the one-mile event.

"*Talagang* anticipated *ko 'yung paglutsa pero hinayaan ko lang na umayre si* Speed O'War (I anticipated that early pressure but I just allowed Speed O'War to run his own race)," said winning rider Virgilio Camañero Jr.

Shock and Awe, sacrificed in the altar of pace in the hope that his stablemate Nothing to Declare would come up with a big run in the stretch, stuck close to Speed O'War from the outset but began to tire approaching the far turn.

It was in the bag from there for Speed O'War as Batangas Force dispatched Shock and Awe from second spot.

"*Matagal pa ang* Triple Crown *pero pipilitin natin na nasa magandang kundisyon siya* (The Triple Crown is still far, but we will see to it that he's in good condition)," said trainer Mario de la Paz of the fast-stepping chestnut colt who netted P450,000 for the Yutadco Stable.

Sired by former Triple Crown champion Strong Material out of Conquistador Quest, the heavily favored Speed O'War finished the race three lengths ahead of Batangas Force, who was another two lengths in front of stablemate Flying Jordan.

Nothing to Declare checked in only fourth followed by Albatross, while Shock and Awe faded to sixth and last.

The winning time was 1:42.4 (23.5-26-24.29).

Batangas Force, ridden by Pat Dilema, settled for P168,750, while Flying Jordan, handled by Dominador Borbe Jr., got P93,750.

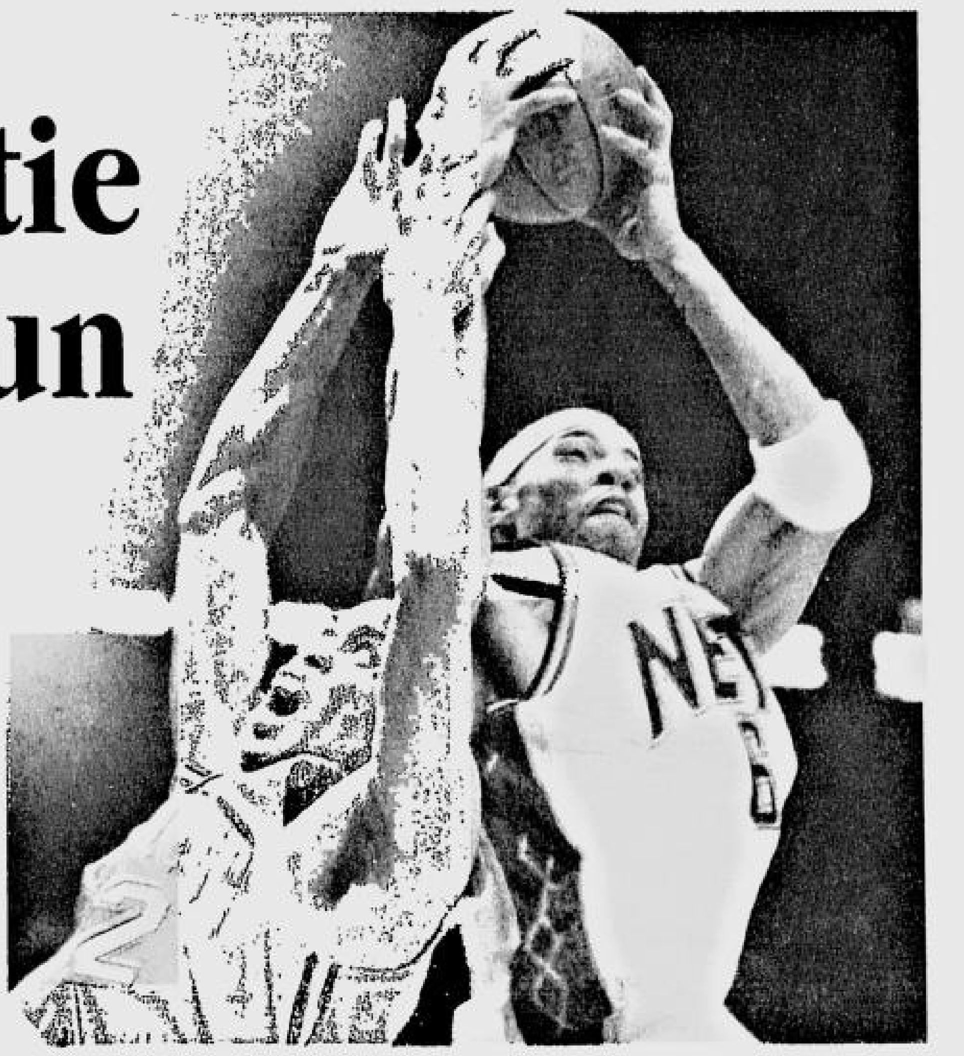
In the other Philracom-sponsored attraction, third choice Mica's Magic uncorked a blazing stretch rally to collar Material Maker and Arriba King in the last strides to the wire and win the Nourish the Children Stakes.

Cesar Domingo Jr. guided Mica's Magic to the narrow victory worth P240,000.

Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag led in the awarding of prizes to the top winners. Also on hand were commissioners Eddie Jose, Eduardo Domingo Jr. and Roger Tandiama.

13TH IN A ROW

Nets rip Hornets, tie longest winning run



MARTIN (right) outrebounds New Orleans' P.J. Brown. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Kenyon Martin had 23 points, 13 rebounds, four steals and four blocks Saturday as the New Jersey Nets beat the New Orleans Hornets, 97-84, to tie the longest winning streak in the NBA this season with 13 victories.

"To be truthful, I really didn't feel well, but I'm here so I am going to show up and play," said Martin, who also had two assists in 40-plus minutes despite having trouble breathing because of a sinus infection.

The victory was the Nets' 12th straight under coach Lawrence Frank, extending his league record for the best coaching start and tying the North American mark for the best start in professional sports.

Joe Morgan took over the Boston Red Sox from John McNamara in 1988 and won a dozen. Jim Price won that many after taking over the baseball New York Giants in 1884.

"Our mind-set is not about losing," New Jersey's Jason Kidd said. "Our mind-set is about getting better each time we take the floor."

Richard Jefferson added 21 points and Kidd finished with 11 points, nine assists and nine rebounds to just miss out on his 59th career triple-double.

In Miami, Dwyane Wade outplayed fellow rookie Carmelo Anthony to score 28 points, and Lamar Odom had 12 of his 21 points in the third quarter as Miami beat Denver, 97-81, to match a season-best four-game winning streak.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki had 25 points and 12 rebounds as the Mavericks recovered from a 16-point first-quarter deficit to defeat the Rockets, 97-88.

Shaquille sued

In Orlando, Florida, Shaquille O'Neal is being sued by a Tampa Bay promotions company for allegedly reneging on an agreement to participate in charity events.

Paramount Celebrity Management filed suit Friday in Orange County Circuit Court for more than $5.6 million.

Complete results: New Jersey 97, New Orleans 84; Miami 97, Denver 81; Dallas 97, Houston 88; LA Clippers 105, Milwaukee 103; Memphis 105, Chicago 98; Portland 105, Boston 84; Golden State 94, Seattle 92. *AP*

Stanford sets 23rd straight victory

LOS ANGELES—It's a school-record 23 consecutive victories and counting for Stanford.

The top-ranked Cardinal defeated UCLA, 73-60, Saturday to remain undefeated with two weeks left in the regular season.

Stanford improved to 14-0 in the Pac-10, and clinched its fourth conference title in six years and 11th overall. Rob Little led the Cardinal with 18 points, tying his career high.

"We want to make history," Little said. "Why not go out to win them all? It's a personal goal for everyone now, with four games left, to go undefeated. Why not?"

The Cardinal overcame a 13-point first-half deficit to beat Southern California on Thursday, then won its seventh in a row at Pauley Pavilion on Saturday, the only opponent with such a streak in the arena's 39-year history.

"I'm really proud of our guys," Stanford coach Mike Montgomery said. "They came to LA to get a sweep to win the conference championship. That's pretty good stuff." *AP*

Weir romps past field, posts 54-hole record

WEIR lines up a putt. AFP

LOS ANGELES—Mike Weir separated himself from the pack with one swing, then turned the Nissan Open into a runaway Saturday. His 5-under 66 gave him a five-shot lead and the lowest 54-hole score in tournament history.

The Canadian known for his great comebacks—all six of his PGA Tour victories have come from off the lead—set himself up to be the first repeat champion at Riviera since Corey Pavin in 1995.

"I'm looking at this as a challenge," Weir said. "I want to prove to myself that I can handle a five-shot lead."

Weir was at 17-under 196, breaking by one shot the 54-hole score set by Fred Couples in 1992.

Shigeki Maruyama, who started the third round tied with Weir, stayed in range until bogeys on both par 3s on the back nine. A birdie on the final hole gave him an even-par 71, five shots behind.

Jeff Maggert had a 69—his third straight round in the 60s—and was at 11-under 202.

"I didn't expect to shoot 5 under," Weir said. "But my putter has just been on fire."

The gallery took their hands off umbrellas long enough to clap and cheer John Daly, but it couldn't sustain him. *AP*

Ferrero, Hewitt forge final showdown

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands—Second-seeded Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain rallied to defeat defending champion Max Mirnyi, 6-7 (2), 6-3, 7-6 (4), Saturday and will meet Australian Lleyton Hewitt in the final of the ABN Amro tournament.

In the other semifinal, the sixth-seeded Hewitt continued his dominance of Britain's Tim Henman, 6-3, 6-3.

Ferrero survived an early onslaught from Mirnyi of Belarus—the third consecutive round that he has advanced after a tiebreaker.

"I think this is the most difficult tournament of my life," a weary Ferrero said afterward.

Hewitt said his match against Henman "wasn't as easy as it looked." He said he would have to "fight for every point" against Ferrero Sunday but was confident of a win as his game has steadily improved throughout the tournament. *AP*

Armstrong tops ITT, takes yellow jersey

TAVIRA, Portugal—Lance Armstrong took the yellow jersey at the Tour of the Algarve on Saturday after winning the individual time trial, where he tested a new bike and riding position.

Armstrong timed 31 minutes, 53 seconds over the flat 24-kilometer (15-mile) course, most of it against a strong wind from Vila Real de Santo Antonio to Tavira.

He led a clean sweep for the US Postal Service team in the fourth of five stages at the season-opening event in southern Portugal. Floyd Landis came one second behind Armstrong, and Colombian Victor Hugo Pena was 12 seconds off the lead.

The three riders also leaped into the top three places in the overall standings. Armstrong's combined time was 13 hours, 22 minutes, 55 seconds. *AP*

The legacy of Astorga

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE LATE Herminio "Togay" Astorga was born into poverty on Dec. 22, 1929 —his father from Barugo, Leyte, was a driver while his mother from Sebunga, Cebu, was a vegetable vendor at the San Andres public market in Malate, where he learned the basics of basketball in improvised one-goal courts on sandlots in the city's crowded district.

His early years promised nothing lofty. But by dint of hard and honest work, a strong faith in God and ever helpful to those who came to him for assistance, he was able to succeed in life, becoming a councilor and later a vice mayor of Manila in the 1960s, a popular NCAA and UAAP basketball star in his college days, university professor, Catholic lay leader and entrepreneur.

As a young boy, Astorga was dubbed "batang Rizal Memorial Stadium" because he did odd jobs at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. He was tennis "pulot" boy, a utility boy for baseball teams and assistant to his uncle in the dressing rooms of the RMSC swimming pool. He also worked as a newsboy, bootblack, janitor, market "cargador" and, later on, as a night pier stevedore at the Manila South Harbor. Being a good son as well, he turned over his earnings to his mother and helped his brothers and sisters finish their studies and get them started in their respective careers.

During the Pacific War, Astorga, then still a teener, was imprisoned and tortured by the Japanese soldiers for helping guerrillas in Malate and Ermita. The ravages of war and the effects of being poor delayed his high school studies. However, after the liberation of Manila, Astorga continued and finished high school at Letran College on a basketball scholarship. It is worth mentioning that despite his inclination toward swimming and baseball, Astorga decided to choose basketball not only because of its popularity in the late 1940s but, first and foremost, he had considered basketball as God's answer to his prayers. Towering at 5-foot-10-1/2, a height then considered a rarity among Filipino basketball players, Astorga also had a sturdy built which came in handy during rough and physical plays. He was a gifted all-around player (center, forward and guard), which enabled him to star as a member of the much-wrote about 1948 Malate Catholic Club basketball team which won all its 33 matches during a tour of Mindanao.

In Letran, Astorga sparked the Intramuros Squires to victory in the 1948 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) junior tournament and the 1949 national high school championship. He was voted the "Most Popular NCAA High School Player" in a nationwide contest sponsored by the defunct Philippines Herald.

Astorga attained his peak as a basketball player in the 1950s.

Although still a high school junior, he was elevated by Letran's Dominican Fathers and, later on, was allowed by the board to play in the NCAA senior basketball tournament, a "first" in the history of the league. With Astorga playing center, Letran won the 1950 NCAA senior title, setting a new record for consecutive victories and earning for the rampaging Knights the moniker "Murder, Inc." He was voted 1950 NCAA "Rookie of the Year," holding the record as top scorer for the entire season with a personal best of 26 points.

After graduation, he transferred to the Far Eastern University where he took up economics, finishing with a BSC degree, also on a basketball scholarship. He would have taken up education with PE as his major were it not for the advice of then PAAF vice president Simeon Toribio, the great Filipino high jumper who won the bronze medal in the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

He played for the touted FEU Tamaraws for two years before turning to campus politics, excelling as a student leader. In 1953, Astorga led the underdog UAAP collegiate players to victory in the then prestigious annual "Challenge to Champions" basketball tournament, beating the highly favored NCAA Selection, powered by the legendary Carlos Loyzaga; the MICAA All-Stars, skippered by the fabled Lauro Mumar; and a Chinese team composed of Chinese Olympians.

Running for councilor in the Malate-Ermita district under the Liberal Party in the early 1960s, Astorga was the lone survivor of the domination by the Nacionalista Party headed by the tough-talking Arsenio Lacson, who would later become the best mayor Manila ever had. When Lacson died in 1962 and Vice Mayor Antonio Villegas took over as mayor, Astorga became vice mayor.

A determined crusader for good and clean government, he was given the TOYM (The Outstanding Young Men) award in 1964 for political leadership, the first ever award given to an athlete.

Astorga died of cerebral hemorrhage on Jan. 19 in New Jersey at the age of 74. His bereaved family, led by his wife Erlinda, will celebrate memorial Masses in his honor at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 27, at the Malate Catholic Church and at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3, at the Ermita Catholic Church.

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8 PURI
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4 KUYA
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2 MILAN
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2 IN THE CUT
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2 KUYA
3 (DTS) MILAN
4 WISHING STAIRS
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2 MILAN

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1 KUYA
2 MILAN
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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	KUYA
Ali 2	MILAN
Ali 3	RUNAWAY JURY
Ali 4	COLD MOUNTAIN
Ali 5	HAUNTED MANSION
Ali 6	HAUNTED OFFICE
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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

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ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	FRIDA / BAHID
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	MILAN
B	BURLESK KING
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LAST SAMURAI
CINEMA-3	WISHING STAIRS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MASTER AND COMMANDER (RI)
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TALE OF TWO SISTERS
CINEMA-6	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
CINEMA-7	MAGIC KITCHEN
CINEMA-8	GUSTO KO SA LALAKI (RI)
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-12	CHASING LIBERTY
CINEMA-14	KUYA
CINEMA-15	MILAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	MILAN
CINEMA-1	MONA LISA SMILE
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-4	CLOSED
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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R13

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R18

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1 **MILAN**
11:45, 2:15, 4:45
7:15, 9:45
PG-13

2 **COLD MOUNTAIN**
11:00, 2:00, 5:00
8:00, 11:00
R-18

3 **RUNAWAY JURY**
11:30, 2:20, 5:10
8:00, 10:50
R-13

4 **HAUNTED MANSION**
11:30, 1:30, 3:30
5:30, 7:30, 9:30
GP

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

CHASING LIBERT PG13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	COLD MOUNTAIN R18 12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:10	RUNAWY JURY R13 12:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:10
MILAN PG13 11:50, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	21 GRAMS R18 1:35, 4:15, 6:55, 9:35	TOTALLY BLONDE R13 1:10, 3:20

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2 MILAN 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 DOLBY DIGITAL
3 COLD MOUNTAIN 10:20, 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00 DTS
4 WISHING STAIRS 12:05, 2:15, 4:35, 6:35, 9:00
5 CRUNAWAY JURY 10:10, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00 DOLBY DIGITAL
6 21 GRAMS 11:45, 2:00, 4:15, 6:40, 9:00 SDDS
7 BONE SNATCHER 11:05, 1:10, 3:15, 5:20, 7:25, 9:30
8 CHASING LIBERTY 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50 DOLBY
9 KUYA 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00 DOLBY
10 TOTALLY BLONDE 12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 9:00

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1 MILAN 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50 DOLBY DIGITAL EX
2 COLD MOUNTAIN 10:10, 1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:50 DOLBY
3 KUYA 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
4 WISHING STAIRS 10:10, 12:05, 2:00, 3:55, 5:50, 7:45, 9:50
5 RUNAWAY JURY 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:00 DOLBY
6 HAUNTED MANSION 10:10, 12:05, 2:00, 3:55, 5:50, 7:45, 9:50 SDDS
7 CHASING LIBERTY 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50 DTS

Big R Supercenter **METRO EAST** 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 HAUNTED MANSION 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00 DOLBY
2 COLD MOUNTAIN 11:10, 2:25, 5:40, 9:00 SDDS
3 KUYA 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00
4 CHASING LIBERTY 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00
5 RUNAWAY JURY 10:20, 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
6 MASTER AND COMMANDER/ MYSTIC RIVER 11:30, 2:10, 4:15, 6:55, 9:00
7 MILAN 10:15, 12:55, 3:35, 6:15, 9:00
8 WISHING STAIRS 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

Big R Supercenter **NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW** 935-3229 / 31

1 HAUNTED MANSION 11:00, 12:50, 2:45, 4:40, 6:35, 8:30
2 CHASING LIBERTY 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40
3 KUYA 10:35, 11:50, 2:05, 4:20, 6:35, 8:50 DOLBY
4 WISHING STAIRS 10:40, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:10
5 MILAN 10:30, 12:35, 3:20, 6:05, 8:50
6 RUNAWAY JURY 10:10, 12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30
7 COLD MOUNTAIN 10:10, 11:40, 2:30, 5:20, 8:30
8 MASTER COMMANDER / MYSTIC RIVER 11:45, 2:40, 5:20, 8:30

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2 MILAN
3 KUYA
4 COLD MOUNTAIN

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1 HAUNTED MANSION
2 MILAN
3 KUYA
4 COLD MOUNTAIN

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1 MILAN
2 WISHING STAIRS
3 KUYA
4 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
5 COLD MOUNTAIN

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1 MILAN
2 THE TWINS EFFECT
3 HAUNTED OFFICE
4 CHASING LIBERTY
5 MONA LISA SMILE

Big R Supercenter **DASMARIÑAS** 852-2125
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2 MILAN
3 CHASING LIBERTY
4 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
5 THE HAUNTED MANSION

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2 WISHING STAIRS
3 MILAN
4 KUYA
5 HAUNTED MANSION
6 COLD MOUNTAIN

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858
1 HAUNTED MANSION
2 CHASING LIBERTY
3 KUYA
4 DTS COLD MOUNTAIN
5 MILAN
6 WISHING STAIRS

BACOLOD 441-0458/59
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2 MONA LISA SMILE
3 A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
4 DIABLO
5 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
6 HAUNTED OFFICE

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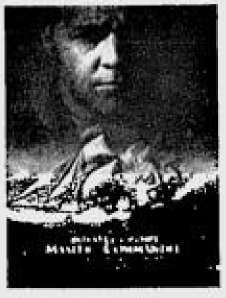
1 MONA LISA SMILE
2 KUYA
3 MILAN
4 A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
5 DIABLO
6 THE GATHERING



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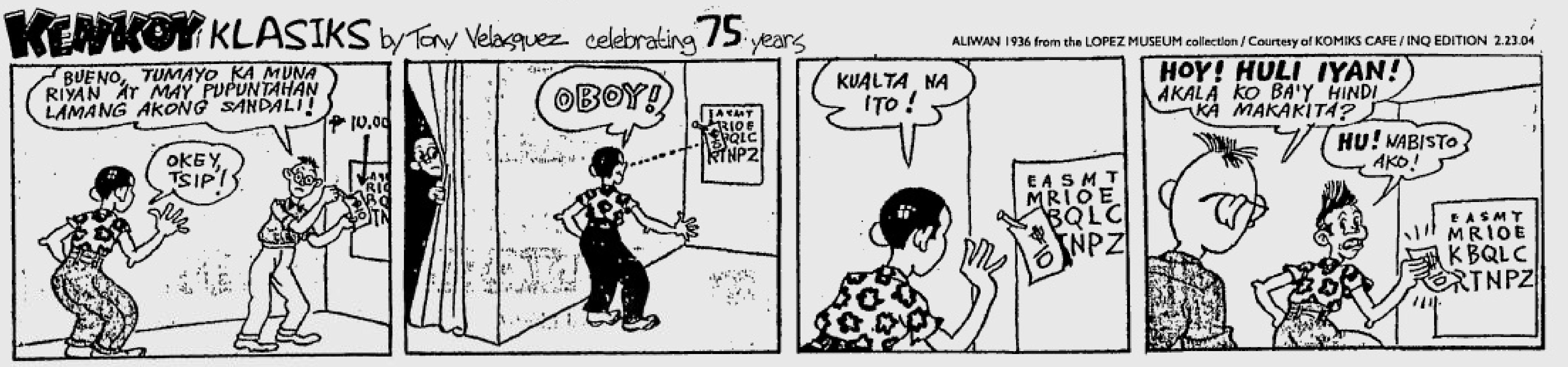
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Dov Simens: Teaching the business of indie filmmaking everywhere

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

OTHER then being Hollywood's current crop of film luminaries, Quentin Tarantino, Spike Lee, Baz Luhrmann and Christopher Nolan have very few things in common.

But one of them is the fact that they attended the "Two-Day Film School" course taught by Dov Simens, who recently held his workshop in the Ayala Center's Expo in Greenbelt I last January. His workshop, which compresses years of film school knowledge, was attended by quite a number of aspiring local talents and some established directors and artists.

Simens is currently on a teaching tour, and prior to his Manila stop, he conducted lessons in Arkansas, Texas, London, LA and New York in the past few weeks alone. He's booked until the third week of January next year, his classes having brought him to several continents with radically different cultures and entertainment demands.

The erstwhile soldier, however, sees very little difference in terms of film industries everywhere.

"After all these years of doing this class, it's not different from nation to nation. It's writers who have written and want their stuff made. It's people that say they're directors who are asking for the opportunity. It's actors that don't have opening title credits on feature films and wanna be in real movies. It's people who have this passion, and they sort of think there's gotta be a system you gotta work in before you're allowed to do it," explains Simens.

SIMENS

The business of making art

"I teach independent filmmaking. I'm not teaching your system here. I don't teach art. So what I teach is the business of making the art. I assume everybody in the class is an adult. I wanna give them the information, the soundbites they understand," says renowned instructor.

Once a green beret, Simens left the army and opened a bookstore, "The Three Rings," before leaving for Los Angeles to pursue other interests when he turned 40. He sold his ten-year-old shop, and made his first and only film, "The Final Hour", which cost him $12,000 to produce.

Piece of crap

"It was a piece of crap and went nowhere. I made not a single penny off of it. But I was in the Montreal Film Festival. I got awards," says the self-deprecating Simens.

He continues, "So I'm an award-winning filmmaker. Big deal, award-winning. And don't tell me some Filipinos are getting awards in Cannes right now. Big deal. I don't care. Did you get a sale? I'm here talking the business."

Roger "King of the B-Movies" Corman hired Simens in 1986, and the former shop owner's eye for keeping a low budget and degree in Mathematics came in very handy as production manager and line producer.

Genius at teaching

"I'm a genius at being a teacher. That's my talent, that's my calling. I have no desire to be a producer or a director. I don't wanna make them. I have done it; I know how hard it is to do," he says.

The teacher, who founded the Hollywood Film Institute in 1989, says making films requires some very decisive partings with one's money: "You will basically write about 38 checks. I know how to teach those 38 steps in a day, taking about ten minutes for each check. What I do is put the puzzle quickly together."

He then proceeded to enumerate a long list of things to purchase, people to pay and various other production expenses. His two-day course, divided into the "Produce and Direct" and "Finance and Distribute" modules, is a total of 18 hours.

Marketing secrets

Simens claims that despite the Philippines' output of only 80 films the past year, it is admirable compared to countries like Sweden and Germany. But he notes that piracy is ravaging the industry here, and shared some secrets regarding how the marketing of American movies works.

"Nineteen out of 20 films lose money in the theatrical window. We take a film that has no value; we do this massive marketing smokescreen with newspaper ads to make it into a perceived value. Nineteen out of 20 consumers won't go see it. We'll make a massive profit six months later when we rent the videos and sell the DVDs," reveals Simens.

"What you have allowed in this nation is, you have destroyed that revenue source. You've allowed pirates to make a nice profit. Stop it, then you'll go back to making 300 feature films a year," he says.

Kick in the pants

Simens dispelled any notion that everyone is guaranteed successful results after attending his workshops. He acknowledges the presence of the truly gifted ones, the inveterate seminar attendees, claiming he's just there to give them the "kick in the pants" that he hopes would eventually push them to practice and start creating.

"I believe I didn't teach them anything. They can see the forest from the trees. They get to put it together without the drama. Each of these people, I never met or shook hands with. But six months to a year later, they call me and say stuff to me: 'I know you don't remember me. I was one of the people in the class. I sat in the back row. I shot my first film, it's going to so-and-so festival. I'm having a screening. I'd love you to come.'"

Simens claims that he's content doing the teaching gig and is happy for these big names: "And they get rich and famous, and it's not politically correct to ever say they learned everything they needed to know from a guy who yelled a lot!"

Tribute to TV's star-building power

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NOW that talent search shows are the rage on local TV, viewers have been giving them enthusiastic and empathetic patronage. However, we note that the winners of some of these talent search programs aren't really that superior when compared to the better crop of starlets who make it in show biz without having gone through the search show's rigorous winnowing and star-building process.

This is a disappointment, because the search process is supposed to hone the programs' best bets to an exemplary total-performance level. Alas, some products, thus far, aren't all that outstanding and unique.

Take "Star in A Million's" first champion, **Erik Santos**. He sings well in the much imitated **Martin Nievera** mode, but doesn't really make his songs his own.

The show's runner-up, **Shereen Regis**, is more unique because she has the unusual combination of petite frame and big, powerful voice. If she had been declared champion, she could really have made her mark on the local entertainment scene.

As it is, despite officially ending up only as "second-best," Shereen is beginning to go places. It is entirely possible that, by next year, she could become more successful than Erik.

You see, the key here is not just acceptable performing ability, but the performer's unique selling proposition—and that, Shereen has in her unusual combination of small size and big voice.

If she had been small and sweet, she'd be like so many other wannabe's. If she was tall and had a big voice, ditto.

But the "contradiction" of her being a small and yet powerful singer is what catches the audience's attention, pretty much like it did decades ago, when another petite but mature-voiced singer, **Nora Aunor**, broke local entertainment's boringly predictable "rules."

On "Starstruck," the two top winners, **Mark Herras** and **Jennylyn Mercado**, are young and talented, but not much more than some teen talents who haven't been "developed" by talent search programs.

That's unfortunate, because the "Starstruck" finalists were put through the wringer and subjected to many daunting tests, in the hope of transforming them into truly excellent performers.

As their careers are shaping up, however, Mark and Jennylyn are mostly being asked to do not much more than be cute, nice to their fans, hardworking, and to gamely answer the usual slumbook questions about their crushes, secrets, etc.

If this is the level that the talent search shows are aiming for, they don't have to subject their finalists to so much stress and so many rigorous lessons.

What the local talent search process does well is to make heretofore unknown youths popular, by featuring them on TV for months, and inviting young viewers to empathize with their dream of stardom.

Thus, the young winners' popularity is not really a tribute to the process, but to the innate star-building power of television, with or without the "search" format.

As for those really outstanding young discoveries who will set the local entertainment firmament ablaze, we'll just have to wait for a really rigorous talent development program that truly wants to do more than keep the fans satisfied.

'Hack/Sign'

CATCH the premiere airing of "Hack/Sign" at 7:30 p.m. on the Animax channel (SkyCable 26). The show tells the story of Tsukasa and his strange adventures in the RPG (role-playing game) world, where he unlocks mysteries involving a rare icon called "The Key of the Twilight."

'Indios Bravos'

"INDIOS Bravos," a contemporary dance-theater piece, will premiere at 7 p.m. on Feb. 24 at Teatro Aguinaldo, Camp Aguinaldo, QC.

The show features Airdance, and is directed by **Paul Morales** and choreographed by **Dwight Rodrigazo**, with original music by **Bob Aves** and **Grace Nono**. Call 373-3567.

Ai-Ai de las Alas . . .

From page A32

of the male dancers will be disqualified every day until we come up with a winner," she explained. "*Basta*, that portion is exciting."

But Ai-Ai has quit "Sing-Galing" show, which she co-hosts with Alan K, another veteran of the sing-along circuit. The show airs on ABC 5 every Sunday.

Allan has also resigned from the show and would be joining Jaya in GMA 7's K Videoke Challenge.

New movie

Ai-Ai is also working on a new movie. "Volta," which is produced by Star Cinema, will be finished in a few more weeks, according to the comedian.

"It's an exciting movie and I hope it's going to be as successful as 'Tanging Ina,'" said Ai-Ai.

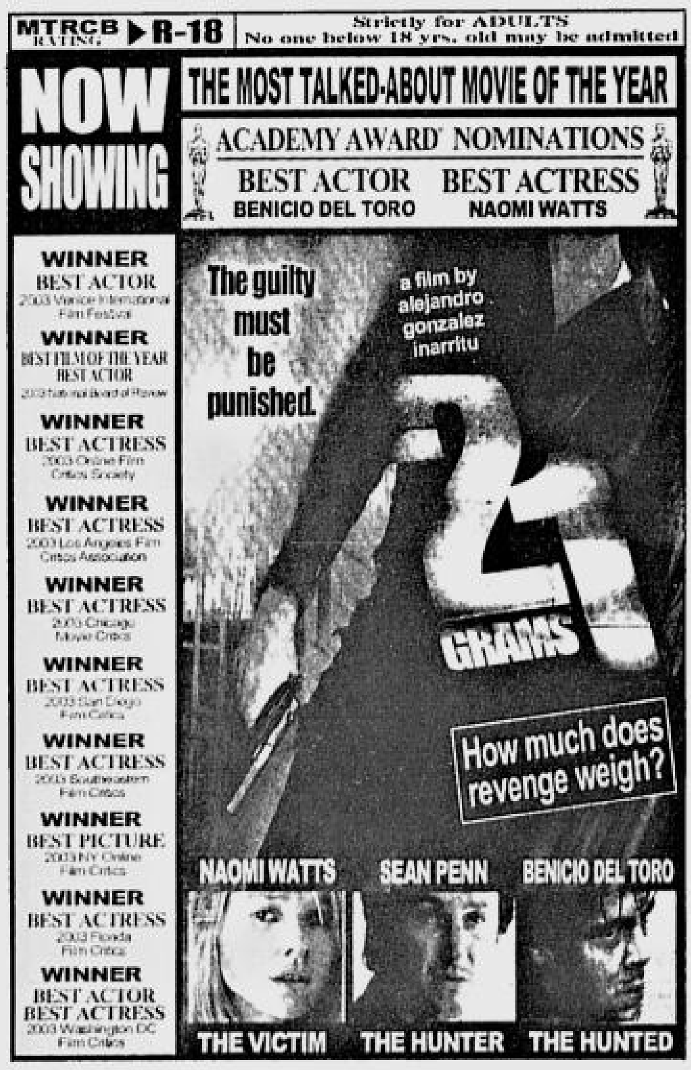
On March 21, Ai-Ai and Vic Sotto will be crowned Box-Office King and Queen of Philippine show biz.

The honor is bestowed on Ai-Ai apparently because of the success of "Tanging Ina," which supposedly broke all recent box-office records.

The movie also opened a lot of doors for Ai-Ai.

DE LAS ALAS

"This early, I'd like to thank the Guillermo Mendoza awards for giving me this prestigious award," she said. "This is one award I will forever cherish because it's not always that you are acknowledged as box-office queen. For me, it's really a great recognition."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Ai-Ai de las Alas makes time for children, love life

By Nap Gutierrez
Contributor

A NEW television show for comedian Ai-Ai de las Alas has cemented her reign as the "busiest" celebrity in local entertainment today.

But to the Box-Office Queen Guillermo Mendoza awardee, squeezing the noontime show "MTB Ang Saya-Saya" into her very hectic schedule was only a matter of good time management.

"I make sure that I have time for my children, that I can handle my schedules well for my shows in ABS-CBN, and that I still have time for my love life," said Ai-Ai.

"MTB Ang Saya-Saya aired last Saturday on Channel 2. Ai-Ai's co-hosts are Edu Manzano, Arnel Ignacio, Mickey Ferriols and comedian Tado.

The show also has the Viva Hot Babes as mainstays, pitting them against the popular Sex Bomb Dancers of rival "Eat Bulaga" on Channel 7. Angelica Jones will also be joining "MTB Ang Saya-Saya."

New format

Even if Ai-Ai has teamed up with close friend Arnel Ignacio in "MTB Ang Saya-Saya," the comedian admitted that it would "take some time before we are all fully adjusted to this new set-up. But we'll try to come up with a good, competitive show," Ai-Ai said.

The show is up against "Eat Bulaga," which has reigned in the ratings, clobbering "Magandang Tanghali Bayan" in the last two months that one of its hosts, Willie Revillame, was axed after a complaint filed by the Movie, Television Review and Classification Board against Revillame's use of vulgar language.

Ai-Ai said "MTB Ang Saya-Saya" has a totally new format.

"The atmosphere is entirely different because there are fewer hosts, and fewer people around us," she said.

Reunion

The show is also a reunion for Ai-Ai and Arnel Ignacio, who had been friends when they were both struggling singers performing in sing-along bars.

"Arnel and I have been friends for the longest time," she said. "We both started in Music Box (a popular sing-along bar in Quezon City), that's why we already have a good rapport. When we came to meet for the dry run, we reminisced our days in sing-along bars. We even asked ourselves who ever thought we'd be together hosting a noontime show for a top television station."

"MTB Ang Saya-Saya will have a video challenge, according to Ai-Ai.

"I will handle that and the portion where 20 male dancers will outdo each other every day. Two

AI-AI/ A31

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BEST ACTOR
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Best Actor
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Best Director
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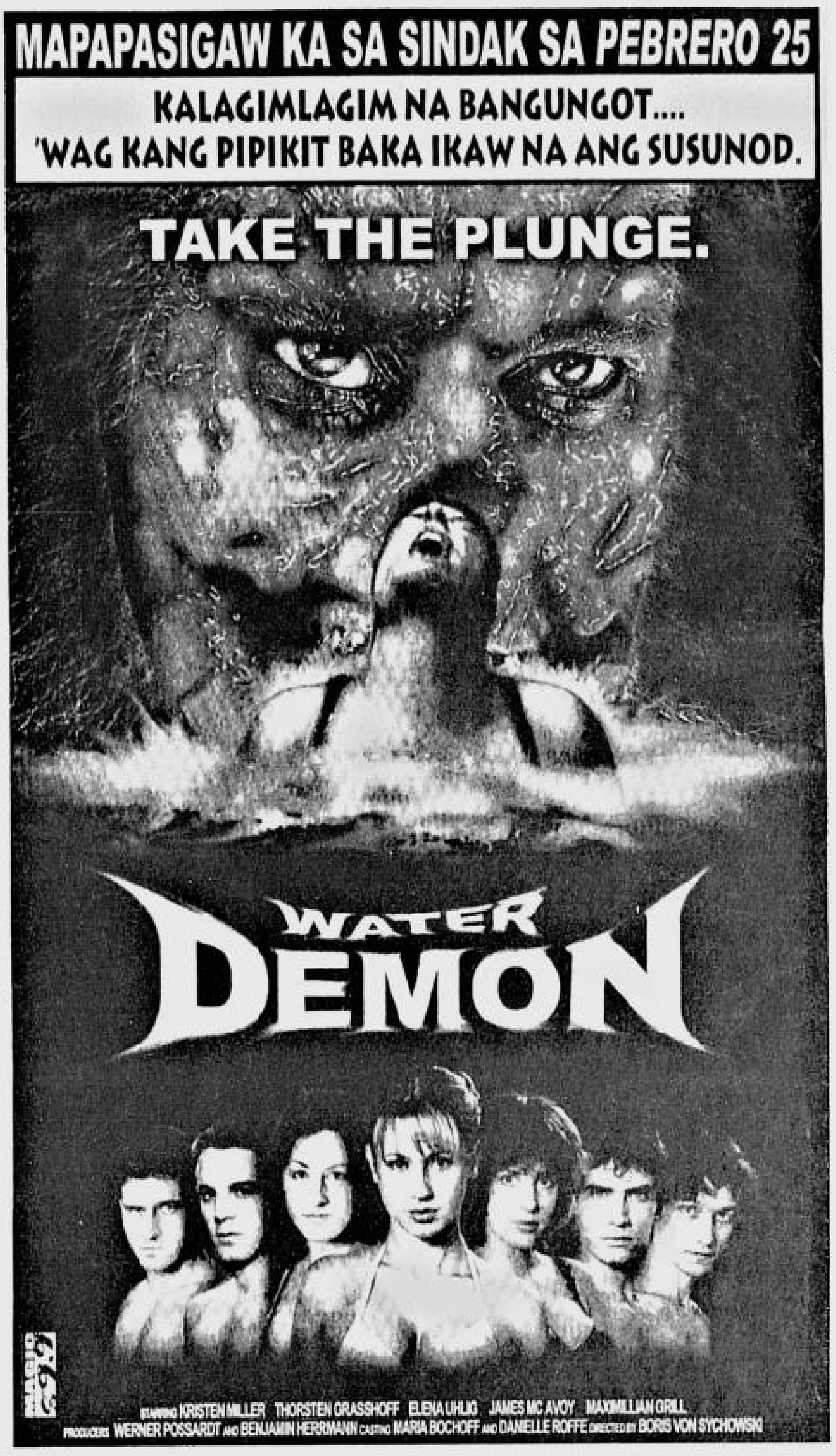
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STAR
INQUIRER

OPENS FEBRUARY 25 AT AYALA CINEMAS
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SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Nicholson & Keaton: 'Something' else
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Harry Sanborn (Jack Nicholson) is a New York music mogul with a libido much younger than his years. He has the world on a string – and a string of beautiful young girlfriends to prove it. During a romantic rendezvous with his newest girlfriend, Marin at her mother's Hamptons beach house, Harry develops chest pains and eventually winds up being nursed by Marin's reluctant mother, Erica Barry (Diane Keaton) – a successful divorced New York playwright. In the process, Harry develops more heart pangs – the romantic kind – for Erica, a woman who is finally right for him in every way.
However, some habits die hard, and when Harry hesitates to pursue Erica, his charming thirty-something doctor (Keanu Reeves) becomes smitten with her. Harry undergoes a true change of heart when he fights to win Erica back.
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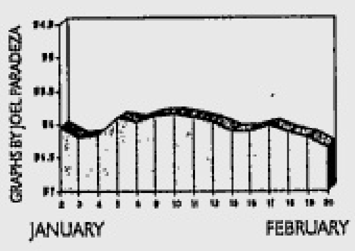

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As of 5 p.m., Feb. 20, 2004

¥ 107.91 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 20, 2004

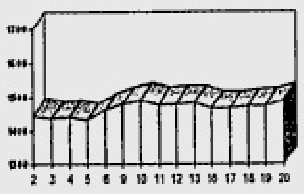
GOLD: $410.30-410.80

per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 19, 2004

February 20, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.786720	1.000000	56.1800
Japan	Yen	0.007346	0.009338	0.5246
United Kingdom	Pound	1.490363	1.894400	106.4274
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.101201	0.128637	7.2268
Switzerland	Franc	0.634861	0.806972	45.3357
Canada	Dollar	0.591474	0.751823	42.2374
Singapore	Dollar	0.467035	0.593648	33.3511
Australia	Dollar	0.621765	0.790326	44.4005
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.086902	2.652661	149.00265
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.209792	0.266667	14.9814
Brunei	Dollar	0.465653	0.591891	33.2524
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000094	0.000119	0.0067
Thailand	Baht	0.020085	0.025530	1.4343
UAE	Dirham	0.214202	0.272272	15.2962
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.271100	71.4104
Argentina	Peso	0.268048	0.340716	19.1414
Brazil	Real	0.266685	0.338983	19.0441
Denmark	Kroner	0.134218	0.170605	9.5846
India	Rupee	0.017405	0.022124	1.2429
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.207054	0.263186	14.7858
Mexico	New Peso	0.071748	0.091199	5.1236
New Zealand	Dollar	0.550693	0.699986	39.3252
Norway	Kroner	0.113465	0.144225	8.1026
Pakistan	Kroner	0.013687	0.017397	0.9774
South Africa	Kroner	0.118688	0.150864	8.4755
Korea	Won	0.000676	0.000859	0.0483
Sweden	Kroner	0.108936	0.138468	7.7791
Syria	Pound	0.017888	0.022738	1.2774
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023819	0.030276	1.7009
Venezuela	Kroner	0.000411	0.000522	0.0293

Stocks seen moving up

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



LOCAL stocks may continue to rise this week but gains may readily be eroded depending on investor sentiment after the Supreme Court decides on the fate of leading presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr.

Fund managers said the stock market, as measured by the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index, may trade within a narrow band between 1,450 and 1,500 this week as it awaits the resolution of FPJ's citizenship case.

The Supreme Court heard arguments last week that sought to invalidate FPJ from the presidential race on claims he is not a natural-born Filipino. The Commission on Elections en banc urged the Supreme Court to junk disqualification petitions against Poe for lack of merit. But three of its commissioners filed comments assailing the decision of the Comelec en banc.

"Is it a catalyst for another selldown? We don't know. It would depend on the reaction of FPJ supporters. But barring any political

STOCKS/ B6

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has found out that eight out of every 10 companies it was monitoring were delinquent taxpayers.

The BIR said it has sent letters to 3,500 of these monitored companies, or roughly 85 percent of the total number of firms covered by the tax drive, asking them to correct their tax payments.

BIR Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said the BIR sent letters of notices (LNs) to these companies whose value-added tax (VAT) remittances for the first and second quarters of 2003 were less than what they owed the government.

The companies included over 1,000 large taxpayers and their clients.

"People are not paying the right taxes, and it is the reality that we want to change," Henares lamented.

She said the BIR detected the tax violations through its third-party information-gathering system, which it adopted last year. The system requires companies to submit a summary of sales and purchases, through which the BIR compares the sales declaration of one company with the purchases stated by its clients.

The 3,500 companies belonged to the second batch of respondents under the BIR's tax compliance verification program. Aside from the 3,500 companies, the BIR earlier sent LNs to another 1,500 companies that were identified to have VAT violations for the third and fourth quarters of 2002.

The BIR said it has started implementing the third-party information-gathering system by looking at the summary list of sales and purchases submitted by large taxpayers. The BIR will eventually include all taxpayers in its tax compliance verification program, Henares said.

She explained that the increase in the number of identified companies was due to the improvements in the third-party information-gathering system.

"Although the system is still in its development stage, it has already improved from the first time we implemented it," she said.

Aside from being asked to rectify their VAT payments, Henares said the 3,500 companies were also told to correct the corresponding errors in their income tax remittances.

She explained that under-declaration of sales not only meant that a company remitted the wrong amount of VAT, but that it also paid an incorrect amount of income tax.

Hard-pressed to collect more revenues to address the country's budget deficit problem, the BIR last year introduced programs to help in the government's revenue generation efforts.

Aside from the third-party information-gathering system, the BIR implemented the electronic payment and filing system (EFPS) and the tax mapping drive.

The EFPS allows taxpayers, initially those belonging to the large taxpayers division, to file their tax declarations and remittances online.

In the tax mapping drive, BIR personnel are sent to the field to check on the tax compliance of business establishments. The drive

85% OF BIR/ B6

PLDT still keen on TV stake

THE MEDIA business, particularly television, is still a target of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s acquisition program this year after PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan admitted that he held exploratory talks with owners of Zoe Broadcasting Co.

Zoe Broadcasting is controlled by evangelist Eddie Villanueva, one of the six presidential aspirants in the May election.

Villanueva admitted there were discussions with the Pangilinan group but he said it happened about 2 or 3 years ago.

There were reports that discussions between Pangilinan and Villanueva were being revived. PLDT bid to acquire a controlling stake in GMA Network Inc. in 2001 but this failed to push through.

PLDT, through its wholly owned subsidiary Mediaquest Holdings Inc., forged a memorandum of understanding with GMA to buy 66.67 percent of the broadcasting firm for P8.5 billion. The plan did not materialize due to valuation and pricing differences.

Pangilinan considers the media business an integral part of PLDT's convergence strategy—to deliver audio and video services using all possible forms of media.

He said he has not given up on investing in television. "I am not over it. Content is an important component. If you move from pure text to multi media messaging, you need video, which is very important."

PLDT/ B2

PNCC eyes NDC funding for ₱7-B tollway rehab

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE National Construction Corp. is planning to tap the state-owned National Development Co. to finance P7 billion worth of rehabilitation and expansion projects in the South Luzon Expressway (Slex).

PNCC president and chief executive Luis Sison said NDC must undertake the priority rehabilitation and expansion projects this year to ease traffic in the South and improve services to motorists.

He said PNCC would need about P6 billion to rehabilitate the Alabang-to-Calamba portion of the expressway and extend it all the way to the Star Express in Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

Sison said another P700 million would have to be spent to repair the viaduct in Alabang, which is already in danger of collapsing.

NDC is the investment arm of the trade and industry department. The company is willing to finance about P2.5 billion of the South Luzon repairs and expansion but Sison said the amount was not sufficient to complete the projects.

"If not NDC, then we may have to partner with a private sector. PNCC could not finance these projects because it loses about P500 million a year because it simply is not earning enough," Sison said in an interview.

State-owned PNCC is into construction, real estate development, and operation and maintenance of the North and South Luzon tollways.

The government had been attempting to sell its equity in the company but no investor had been enticed to buy a losing company.

PNCC/ B2

HOW to make RP globally competitive

/B8

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Bangko Sentral urges firms to hedge foreign exchange risks

By Doris C. Dumlao

WITH the peso tumbling to historic lows, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is urging corporate dollar users to hedge their foreign exchange risks using the Currency Risk Protection Program (CRPP).

In an interview on Friday, BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said only oil companies have so far been availing themselves of the CRPP.

"There is room for more availment under the facility if they would like to hedge their risks," Tetangco said.

The BSP executive said he would like to remind the market that the CRPP, which had significantly contributed in soothing sharp foreign exchange volatility at the peak of the Asian crisis, still existed.

"They can avail now if they think the peso will be under pressure," he said.

The CRPP facility is a non-deliverable forward contract (NDF) between the BSP and commercial banks with the foreign exchange obligations of bank clients as the underlying transaction.

The hedging facility was introduced by the BSP when the Asian currency turmoil erupted in 1997 to ease the pressure created by market players wanting to frontload their future foreign currency requirements and by borrowers wanting to cover foreign currency obligations that have yet to mature.

Forwards refer to the purchase of a specific amount of goods at a specific price for settlement at a future date. In the case of NDFs, the settlement is in pesos and covers only the net difference between the contracted forward rate and the prevailing spot rate at maturity.

In the past, even oil companies found the CRPP very expensive but Tetangco noted that the BSP had since then adjusted to a more manageable pricing and likewise expanded the coverage of the facility.

Among those eligible under the CRPP were net importers, those with registered foreign currency-denominated bonds and foreign currency deposit unit loans with the original maturities longer than one year up to five years, and clients with trade transactions such as manufacturers.

The BSP has likewise authorized banks to enter into long-term cross currency basis swaps with foreign investors. This aims to address the hedging requirements of qualified users with long-term foreign currency obligations, and help attract foreign direct investments into the Philippines.

BSP to prod banks to boost lending

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas will again use moral suasion to encourage banks to release more funds to pump-prime the economy.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said on Friday one of the downside risks it would have to watch out for, based on the results of its recent business survey, was limited access to credit by the borrowers.

"This is one area that we want to look at. We probably want to discuss this with the banking system," Buenaventura said.

Based on the BSP's quarterly survey on business expectations, local business sentiment remained generally optimistic but confidence was declining in Metro Manila.

About a third of the respondents cited high interest rates and limited access to credit as among the downside risks.

"This is what the business expectations survey is all about, to allow us to get feedback on another constituency which is the client base. We will bring this up in our next meeting with the BAP (Bankers Association of the Philippines)."

BAP president Cesar Virata, on the other hand, had said banks would have no choice but to expand their lending portfolio to make money this year.

Virata said that unlike the past few years, bankers could not expect as much earnings from treasury activities as interest rates were now on the rise. He said it was difficult to lock in profits from securities trading when interest rates are on an uptrend.

Last year, growth in lending by local banks was below the BSP's expectations.

For its part, the BSP has assured that monetary policy would continue to provide an appropriate level of liquidity adequate to finance the economy's requirements for sustained growth and respond in a timely manner to emergent risks to future inflation.

The BSP closely monitors banks' compliance and imposes sanctions on erring banks to ensure that banks meet the mandatory credit requirements to small and medium enterprises.

Last year, the BSP allowed domestic liquidity to expand by 4.3 percent. The expansion reflected mainly the growth in domestic demand.

The country's domestic economy expanded by 4.5 percent in 2003, an improvement compared to the previous two years.

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Doris C. Dumlao

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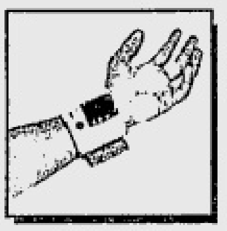

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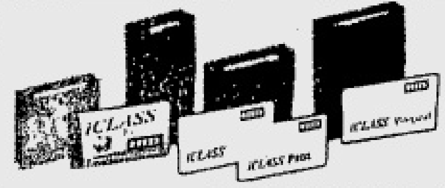

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Doing an Argentina?

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

ABOUT 12 years ago, star international economist Paul Krugman described the Philippines as a Latin American economy on the wrong side of the world. In 1991, reeling from several coup attempts, a devastating earthquake and the Mt. Pinatubo eruption, the Philippine economy stood still. Inflation rate was in the double digits, debt service was taking up more than a third of the government budget, the budget deficit and the current account deficit in the balance of payments were at unsustainable levels.

In contrast, most of our Southeast Asian neighbors were booming, with GDP growth rates running at 5-8 percent for the preceding decade, government budgets in balance or even surplus, and inflation and unemployment rates at low single-digit levels. In short, we were indeed the "sick man of Asia." Our economy's fundamental features resembled that of troubled economies on the other side of the world. Krugman was right.

Argentina in crisis

With the continuing slide of the Philippine peso in the past weeks, the specter of an Argentina-type economic crisis is now being raised. What exactly happened in Argentina?

That country's real gross domestic product fell 28 percent between 1998 and 2002, a full-blown depression. The Argentinian peso, held fixed at one peso to one US dollar since 1991, was devalued in early 2002 to nearly P4 to the dollar, slightly recovering thereafter. Inflation, which had been low or even negative since the early 1990s, shot up to 41 percent in 2002. Unemployment doubled from 12 percent in 1998 to 24 percent in 2002. Poverty incidence shot up from 25.9 percent in 1998 to 57.5 percent in 2002.

These were the disastrous results. What led to them? While many different explanations for the Argentina crisis have come out, disagreements tend to be on the degree of importance of specific factors, but certain facts emerge as the preconditions that fueled the crisis.

First, the turbulent political and economic history of the country had seemingly set the stage for inherent instability. Second, the Argentina peso had been under a currency board-type of system that essentially fixed its value equivalent to one US dollar since 1991.

Pressure had built on the artificially fixed exchange rate through the 1990s until it had to give way to a dramatic devaluation. Third, the country suffered the fallout from the currency crises in Russia and Brazil in 1998, triggering a recession (i.e. a decline in economic output) that eventually turned into the 2002 depression. And fourth, the country's economic managers made one blunder after another that progressively worsened confidence in the economy, leading to the bank runs that prompted shutting down the entire banking system.

Glaring contrasts

While there is some usefulness in jolting ourselves into urgent corrective action, I believe that likening ourselves to Argentina at this time is at least premature, if not unfounded. There may indeed be some similarities between our situation now and that of Argentina at the onset of its crisis, but there are more glaring contrasts.

They had been on a fixed exchange rate for some time; our exchange rate is market-determined. As a result, their currency had been highly overvalued; ours is now even considered undervalued, pushed down below economically justified levels by political apprehensions in the market. They had been suffering an externally induced recession that snowballed; our economic growth is actually accelerating. They were earning $26 billion from their exports; we are earning much more, at $36 billion. Their government debt amounted to about $141 billion, mostly with short- to medium-term maturities; ours is about $28 billion, with maturities averaging 16-17 years. Their foreign exchange reserves were not even enough to finance one month's worth of their imports; we have consistently had enough to fund about three months' worth of ours.

These dramatic contrasts tell me we are in no way about to slip into an Argentina-style economic crisis. We are, in fact, quite far from it.

Sense of urgency

These facts ought to reassure the markets and arrest what could be a self-fulfilling pessimism about the Philippine economy. But it should not lead anyone to complacency about our economic situation either. While we are not about to become another Argentina given current circumstances, we very well could later if we do not change course now.

Government finances remain the weakest link in our economy, and we must lament in the strongest terms Congress' failure to act on the most critical of the revenue-enhancing bills pending before them. One can only pray that the 13th Congress will "hit the ground running" and get to work on these most urgent measures soonest. We must also lament Congress' traditional one-sided propensity for enacting populist laws that involve new expenditures, without corresponding measures to provide the revenues to fund them.

But we taxpayers must not look to the government as if it was its entire fault and responsibility. Avoiding an Argentina scenario rests just as importantly on all of us paying taxes correctly and faithfully.

The tax cheats and evaders among us would equally share the blame as erring public officials if ever we do become, once again, a crisis-ridden Latin American economy on the wrong side of the world. *Matauhan na tayo.*

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Neda bucks proposal to merge with DBM, DoF

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority has expressed reservations over the proposal to merge it with the finance and budget departments to create one economic super-body.

The Neda said merging the three government agencies would give too much power to the resulting entity, therefore defeating the principle of check and balance.

"It's not impossible, but it will be very difficult to manage and will give vast economic powers to the newly created agency," according to Neda Director General Romulo Neri.

Neri said in an interview that the Neda alone already had too much tasks, making it "very challenging" for him to handle.

He added that creating one agency that would be assigned to perform the duties of the Neda, the Department of Finance and the Department of Budget and Management could only alter focus on specific tasks that each of the three agencies currently handle.

Neri, however, suggested that revenue collection agencies—the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs—may be combined into one unit, and the financial planning department of the DoF may be merged with the Neda and the DBM.

The proposal to merge the three agencies was earlier raised to help in the government's efforts to trim the bureaucracy and at the same time reduce government spending.

Bureaucracy in government has often been cited as a major drag in operating businesses in the country.

The government has set a goal of arresting the country's huge budget deficit and having a balanced budget by 2010. The budget deficit stood at about P198 billion as of December 2003.

The Department of Budget and Management said a group had already been assigned to study the proposal.

It said creating one department to perform the functions of the three government agencies was feasible, considering that in other countries, only one entity was responsible for the tasks of the three government agencies.

PNCC eyes NDC . . .

From page B1

Sison said that even with the more recent tollway increases, the PNCC remained in the red. He said the tollway fee in the Philippines had been the lowest in Asia.

"The standard tollway fee in Asia is about P2 for every kilometer. But before the recent increase, we were collecting the lowest rate of about 26 centavos per kilometer," the PNCC president said.

Last June, the government, through the Privatization Council, was supposed to bid out its stake in PNCC but deferred the sale indefinitely. The delay was caused by issues related to the expansion and rehabilitation of the South Luzon expressway.

NDC sought the postponement of the PNCC privatization. NDC held the view that if it would put in money into the expressway projects, it would like its investment protected and thus preferred the PNCC to stay under government control.

NDC said it would use the proceeds of its bond issue to finance part of the PNCC projects.

In 2002, the government declared a failed bid when it tried to sell 90 percent of its stake in PNCC.

PLDT still keen on TV stake

From page B1

"At some point you have to go to the media component," he added.

The PLDT chief said he believed that the acquisition by Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco of Associate Broadcasting Co. or ABC-5 would provide a healthy competition to the two major networks—GMA-7 and ABS-CBN.

Pangilinan earlier said that a television company would complete the convergence plan.

"We will be providers of content and the owners of the pipes. So those involved in video production will be the principal providers of video content, which we can then sell through our pipes. We can also put our radio programs through our cellular phones, so there is lots of scope for convergence. Ultimately, we'll be able to put live video through the wireless handsets too," Pangilinan said in 2001 when PLDT was in the process of acquiring GMA-7. In November 2001, PLDT said it would put off the acquisition indefinitely.

Clarissa S. Batino

Deflating Piltel

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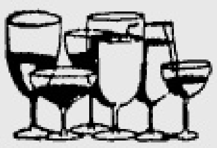

Victor C. Agustin

PILTEL on Friday plunged more than 20 percent to close at P1.32, after PLDT Group chair Manuel V. Pangilinan categorically ruled out using it to backdoor list between now and 2006 the telecom group's goldmine, Smart.

Despite Piltel's still eye-popping capital deficiency of more than P22 billion as of end-2003, the stock market punters riding on the backdoor rumor had managed to pump up the debt-saddled stock to as high as P1.98 from its bottom of 17 cents last year.

Smart is citing poor market conditions and an uncertain political situation in an attempt to dodge the August 2004 listing deadline.

MVP also gave a hint for the delay.

He told analysts that the telecom group and the creditor consortium are deep in talks to "rearrange" Piltel's crisscrossing debts, whose solution, according to the investment banking grapevine, would most likely lead to the pledged PLDT shares held by banks to being swapped with Piltel's.

The conversion formula, according to the grapevine, is 170 Piltel shares for every one PLDT share.

Using that ratio and a P1.70/share price the day before the Friday plunge, one brokerage subsidiary of a creditor bank has made tentative calculations to arrive at a Piltel post-conversion "estimated adjusted price" of, hold your breath, P0.25/share.

Between 25 centavos and Friday's closing of P1.32 certainly spells many a broken bone.

Sore-rority sisters

THE factionalism that has been burbling all these months within the UP Sigma Delta Phi alumnae has finally boiled over into the courts.

The group of Georgitta Pimentel-Puyat, Clarita Pimentel-Dragon, and Elena San Juan-Fernando has now asked the Makati Regional Trial Court to stop their ouster from the sorority's trust fund body, a separate corporation from the Sigma Delta Phi Alumnae Association.

Aside from ousting them, the alumnae association, headed by chair/president Linda Gamboa, has been asking the Puyat-Dragon group to account for the more than P1-million charity fund that had been raised by the sisters.

The sorority includes broadcaster Ces Drilon, Figaro's Pacita Juan, painter Anita Magsaysay-Ho, artist Celia Diaz-Laurel, former Supreme Court justices Ameurfina Melencio-Herrera and Flerida Ruth Romero, former Cabinet secretaries Solita Monsod and Josefina Lichauco, art pioneer Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista, and HIV doctor Isabel Echanis-Melgar.

The Puyat-Dragon group claimed that the 2003 audited financial statement could not be completed on time pending the receipt of the latest bank statement from Citibank.

In any case, the Citibank Dec. 21, 2003, statement showed the trust fund still had more than P1 million in "deposits and investments," according to the Puyat-Dragon group.

The unfortunate task of hearing the petition for injunction and presiding over the mercurial matronas fell on Judge Sixto Marella Jr.

Short rejoinders

- GLOBE executive Gil Genio said the FBI served the subpoena in his Honolulu hotel room "during daytime", not past midnight as reported here last Wednesday. His appearance on the March 10 grand jury hearings in Honolulu will be his second, after his scheduled testimony earlier this month was rescheduled.
- CAMPAIGNS and Grey said the World Bank contract the ad agency had obtained for a corporate governance project was signed in August 2001, not during the height of the Erap impeachment campaign as reported here Friday.

Heard through the grapevine

THE US Department of Justice appears bent on nailing down the Philippine telecom companies, with the feds now sending letters to other foreign carriers around the world asking questions about certain actions Philippine telecom companies had supposedly engaged in 2002-2003. *(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)*

US firm eyes chicken venture in RP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ONE of the United States' leading poultry producers wants to invest in a chicken-processing business here to take advantage of setbacks suffered by Thailand due to the bird flu scare.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said in a media briefing that Perdue Farms Inc. was looking at a joint venture with Indonesia-based Royal Persada Cargo, which has refrigeration facilities at the Laguna Technopark.

"If the project pushes through, operations would start within a few weeks," Purisima said. "They said they could start at a capacity of 10,000 metric tons, but this needs approval from the Department of Agriculture."

He said the investment was substantial, but he did not give an amount.

The official explained that Perdue was moving in to take advantage of the chicken supply situation in the region in the wake of the bird flu scare.

Purisima said dresssed chicken would be shipped from the United States, processed here, then reexported to China, Singapore and especially to Japan.

"Perdue is a large exporter of dressed chicken to Japan. It is moving in to the export of processed chicken (amid problems that rival Thailand is having due to bird flu)," he said.

The official said Perdue, which has operations in China, chose to expand in the Philippines over Southern China due to the Filipino workers better command of English.

"Labor costs are also so cheaper here than in the US," he added.

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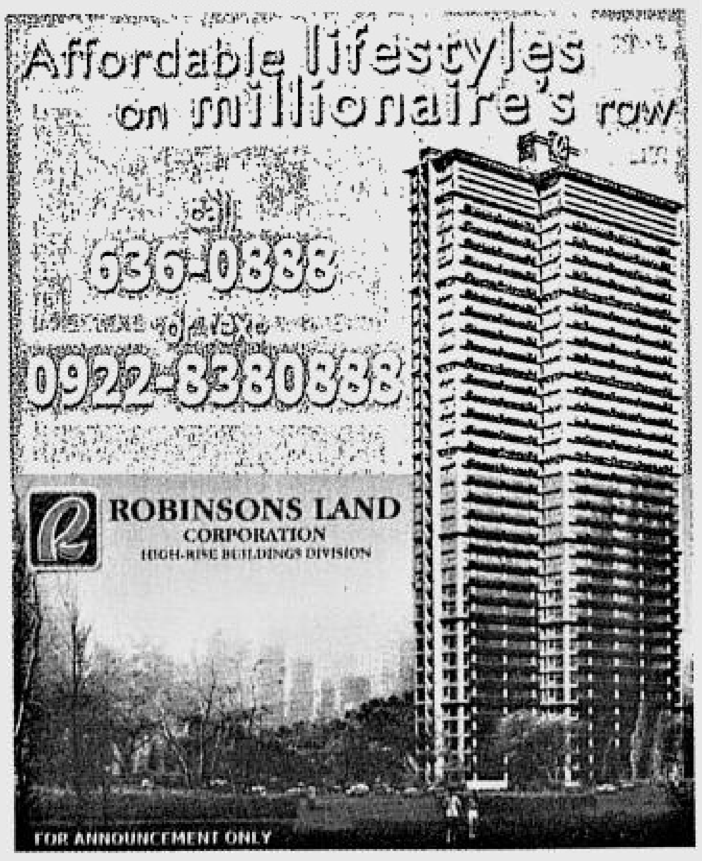

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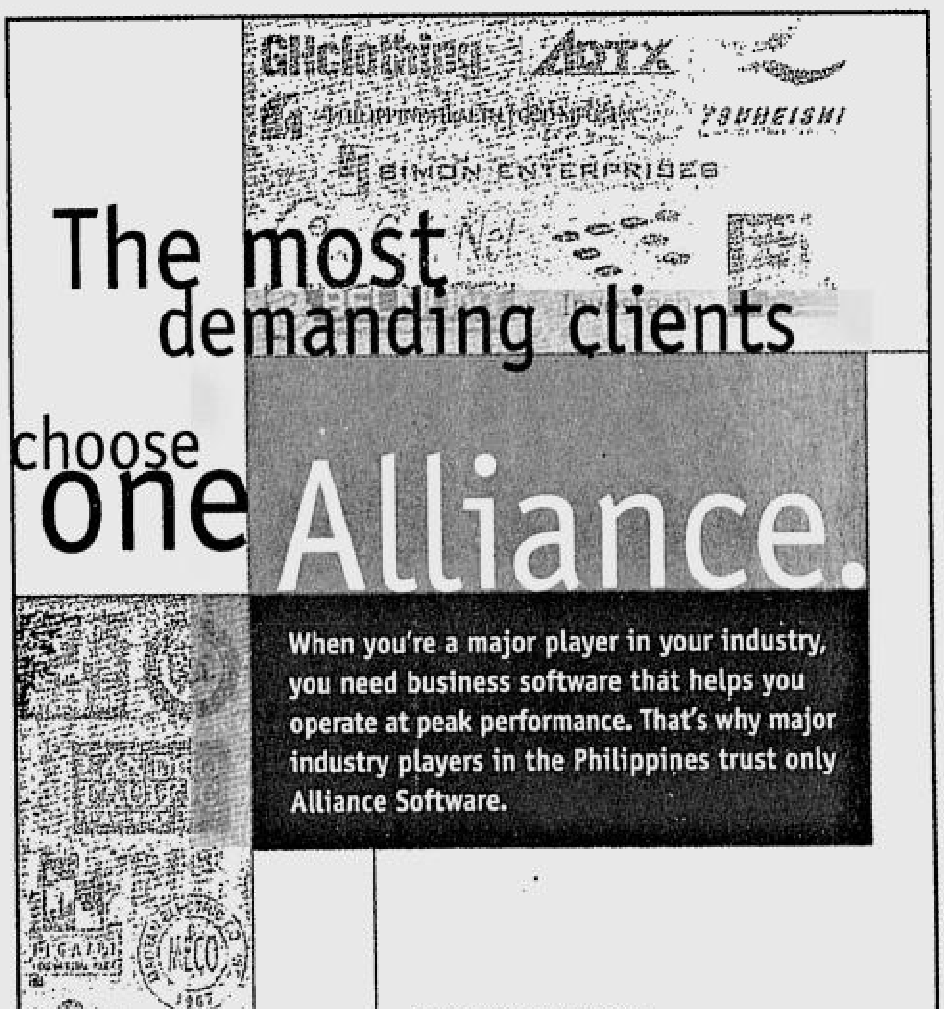

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TO AVERT POWER CRISIS

NTC to raise ₱2.4B from sale of two projects

THE NATIONAL Transmission Corp. (Transco) has put on the auction block two projects in Mindanao worth around P2.4 billion in its bid to avert a power crisis in the area by 2006.

The two major transmission projects up for bidding are the 138-kilovolt (kV) General Santos-Tacurong-Nuling line and the Zamboanga City area 138-kV Power Transmission Program.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said in a statement over the weekend that these two projects, when completed two years from now, would help boost Transco's capability to deliver power from Northern Mindanao to Southern Mindanao.

Under the current Mindanao power situation, 75 percent of total generation capacity is found in the north, but 47 percent of total demand is in the power-hungry south.

Data from the Department of Energy indicate that the growth of demand for electricity in Southern Mindanao averages around 10 percent while that in Northern Mindanao averages only one percent.

What is being done now to meet the power demands of the south is the importation of electricity from the generation-rich north to Southern Mindanao.

Southern Mindanao has its own dependable capacity of 262 megawatts of electricity, but it has a peak demand of 495 MW, resulting in a deficit of 233 MW which it imports from the north.

ORTIZ

The P1.4-billion Miyazawa Fund-financed GenSan-Tacuring-Nuling project, one which will help improve power tranmission between the north and the south, will reinforce transmission lines running through the provinces of Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and South Cotobato.

Upon completion, this will improve the lines' capability to handle bulk power as well as accommodate the growing electricity demand coming from the areas' fishing, packing, canning and seafood processing industries.

It will also provide much needed support to the General Santos Airport and Fishport and serve as an alternate power supply line to the SOCSKSARGEN area from the Mt. Apo Geothermal Power Plant.

The P876-million Zamboanga City Area project, on the other hand, will reinforce transmission lines between Sangali and Pitogo and improve the delivery of power to Zamboanga City and some of its neighboring areas.

"These major undertakings underscore Transco's commitment to provide reliable power especially to the boom centers of the region. As Mindanao sees renewed economic activity, TransCo wants to ensure that electricity will be there when it is needed," Ortiz said.

Bidding for the two major projects will take place within the first half of the year.

During a five-city roadshow in Mindanao last week, Transco likewise inaugurated various projects worth P827 million.

These included the P40-million Klinan capacitor bank reinforment project in General Santos City; the P80-million New Loon capacitor bank project, the P238-million Maco Substation and the P327-million Bunawan Switching station in Davao City; the P78-million Aplaya Transformer project in Cagayan de Oro; and the P64-million Lugait substation project in Iligan City.

Abigail L. Ho

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2. Techniques To Be In Peak Performance
3. "First Who, Then What"
4. Hiring Tips To Recruit Disciplined People
5. Making Filipino Cultural Traits Work For You

1. Part 2
2. Practices To Confront the Brutal Facts
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Franco del Rosario
Speaker

Franco del Rosario is chairman of the 2004 Management Association of the Philippines Annual CEO Conference. He was chairman as well in 2003.

MBA from Columbia University in New York 12 years with New York & Florida offices of IBM Corp 9 years with The Dole Company in California, Philippines, Nicaragua, Korea & Japan Certified Dale Carnegie Instructor, Florida, U.S.A

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INQUIRER

Has insurance liberalization been any good?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

HOW time flies. Next month, the liberalization of the insurance industry will be 10 years old. Especially to those who still feel strongly against trade liberalization or globalization, what happened in the insurance industry for the past 10 years will be an interesting case study.

During the business boom following the end of World War II, insurance companies popped up like mushrooms. By the early 60's, the industry was thought to be overcrowded, with about 200 foreign and domestic companies. At the request of the leaders of the industry, Malacañang issued an executive order banning the licensing of new domestic companies and the entry of additional foreign companies. The ban applied to both life and non-life insurance companies.

In April 1994, the Insurance Commission, with the backing of the Department of Finance, made a momentous decision. In line with the Asean free trade agreements, the Commission liberalized/deregulated the entire insurance industry—insurers, brokers, agents, adjusters, and surveyors.

For the first time in about 30 years, foreigners were allowed entry into the insurance business. A foreign company was shown three doors: it could open a full-fledged branch, set up a wholly owned subsidiary, or buy into an existing Filipino company. Twenty of some of the largest life insurance companies in the world rushed in, doubling the number of companies almost overnight. Fewer non-life companies came in. But international brokers, surveyors and adjusters also gained footholds.

Because free trade and cartels do not mix, the Commission disbanded the non-life insurance cartel. Since ancient times, it seems, the cartel dictated the premiums for fire and motor car insurance. In fact, up to about 1951, the cartel was the dummy of an obscure office in London called Fire Offices Committee (Foreign). At the prodding of the nationalist elements in the industry, the umbilical cord was finally cut. The cartel was now local in character.

Then, under a new insurance code decreed by Marcos in 1974, the cartel qualified for a license from the Commission. The cartel's power was now total. As a result, the cartel started throwing its weight around. Inspection teams pored over a company's records and severe fines were slapped on erring members. At one point, the cartel seriously thought of asking the Armed Forces to enforce its rules.

Has liberalization of the insurance industry been good for everyone around? I may not be the best judge. Being right smack in the middle of it all, some may say I see only the trees and not the forest. But I will venture to say that there have been more pluses than minuses in ten years of insurance liberalization.

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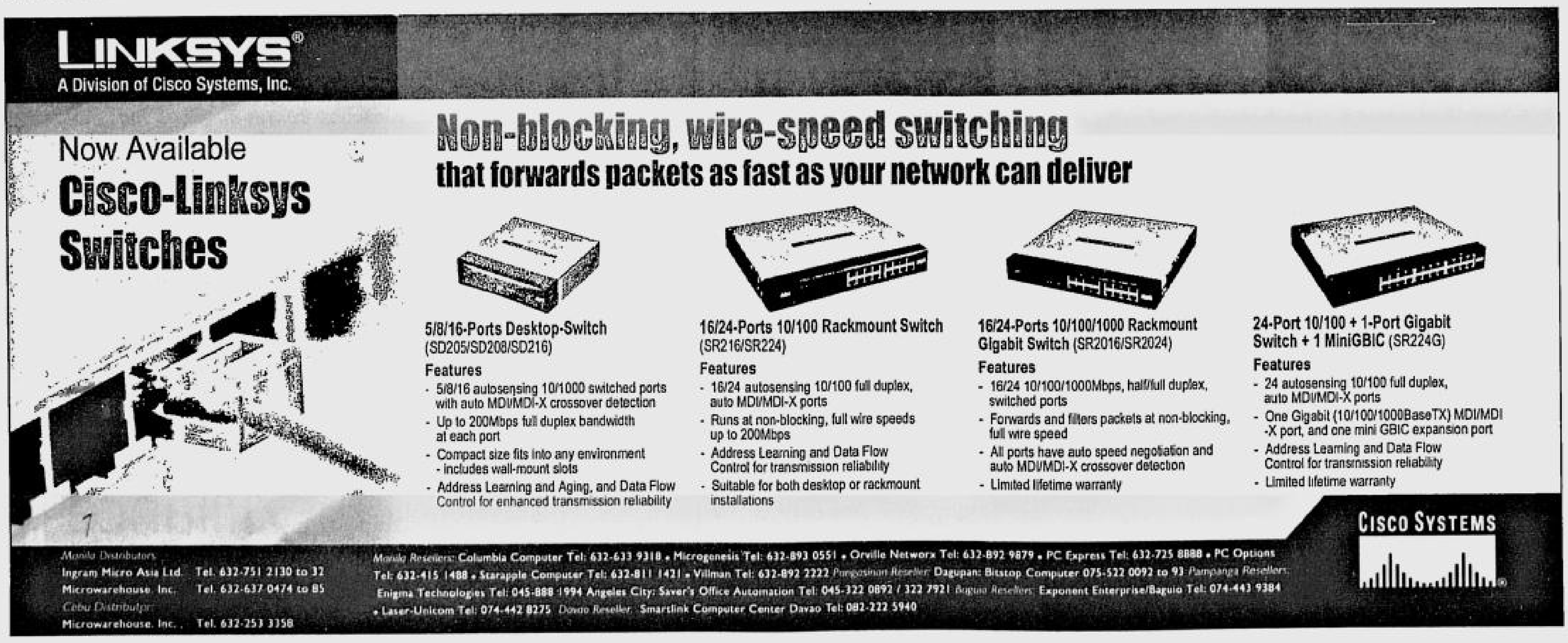
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ICC gives nod to ₱5-B SSS BOT project

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE INTER-AGENCY Investment Coordination Committee gave its the first pass approval on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) project that will develop the Social Security System's four-hectare prime property in Quezon City into a mixed-use complex estimated at P5.4 billion.

"The unsolicited proposal submitted by SSS and UK-based property expert EC Harris will now be subjected to a Swiss challenge as mandated by the BOT law to determine if the pricing is reasonable," said Neda Public Investment Director Rolando Tungpalan. The ICC is led by the National Economic and Development Authority.

A Swiss challenge means other parties will be given a chance to submit a better bid for the project.

The ICC, screens projects requiring large public investment and/or official development assistance from foreign donors.

The proposal of SSS and the consortium led by developer EC Harris include a plan to develop the idle property on East Avenue corner Edsa into an SSS Center with twin towers that will become the pension fund's new headquarters.

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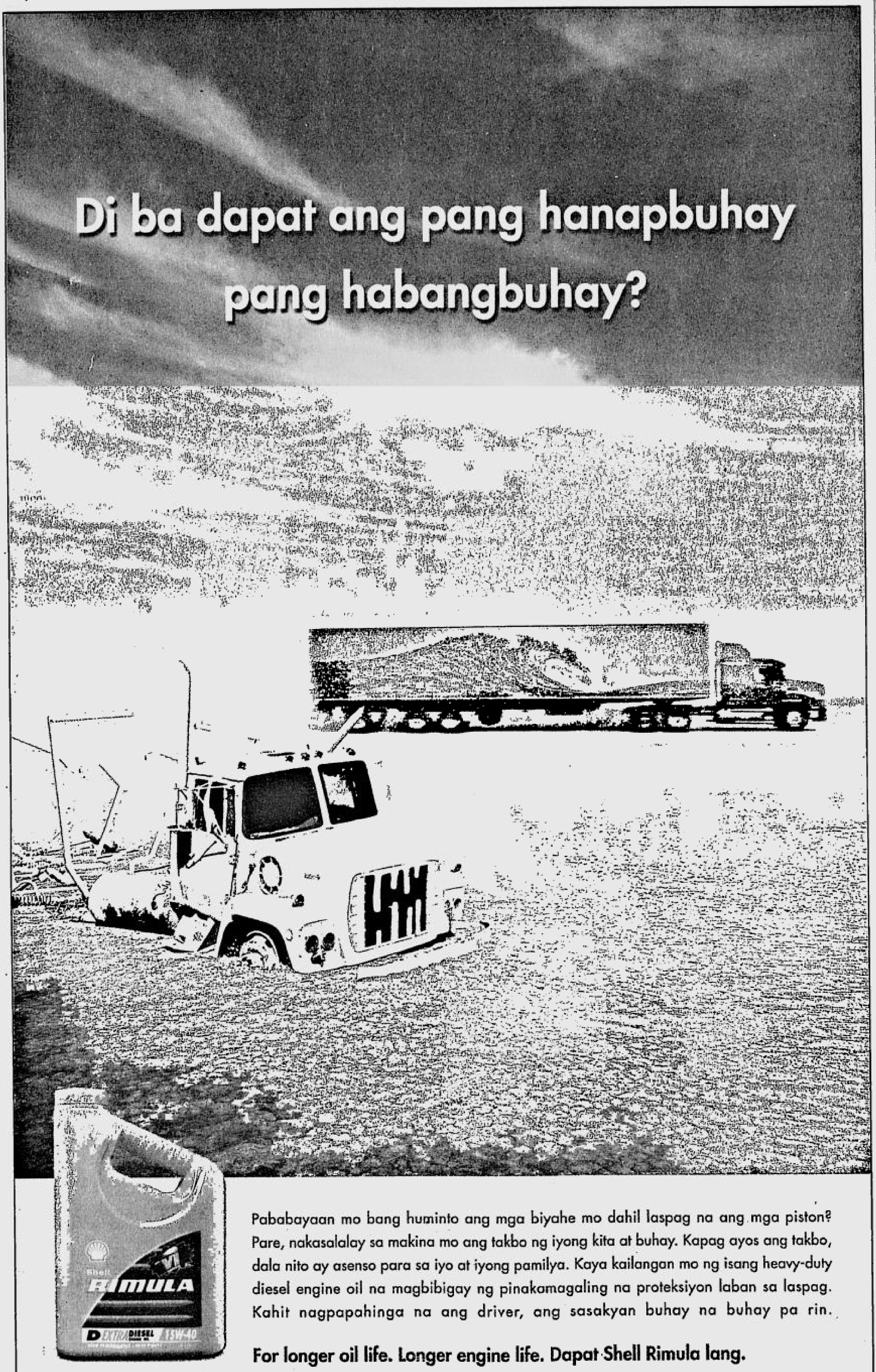

Pababayaan mo bang huminto ang mga biyahe mo dahil laspag na ang mga piston? Pare, nakasalalay sa makina mo ang takbo ng iyong kita at buhay. Kapag ayos ang takbo, dala nito ay asenso para sa iyo at iyong pamilya. Kaya kailangan mo ng isang heavy-duty diesel engine oil na magbibigay ng pinakamagaling na proteksiyon laban sa laspag. Kahit nagpapahinga na ang driver, ang sasakyan buhay na buhay pa rin.

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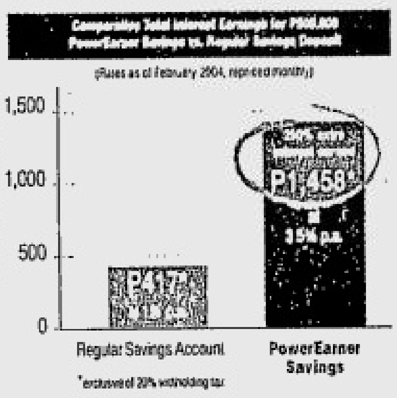
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Smart, Piltel see 14M subscribers by March; PLDT sets ₱18-B capex

By Clarissa S. Batino

PANGILINAN

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. said it would spend about P18 billion this year to finance the capital requirements of its fixed-line and wireless businesses.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said the company would earmark between P6 billion and P7 billion to roll out more lines that would sustain the growing consumer and corporate data business while more than P11 billion would be allotted for the continued expansion of the wireless operations.

In the first quarter, the PLDT chair said that Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. could hit the 14-million subscriber base from 12.9 million as of end-2003. Of the total subscriber base, Smart accounted for more than 10 million.

In 2002, subscribers to PLDT's two mobile phone companies stood at 8.6 million. Rival firm Globe Telecom Inc. ended 2003 with close to 9 million subscribers.

"The January and February numbers are very encouraging. I think we could sustain the growth we posted last year," Pangilinan said. PLDT recorded net earnings of P11.18 billion in 2003, driven mainly by Smart's net income of P16.12 billion.

Pangilinan said PLDT would grow the fixed-line business by improving the consumer and data operations.

"We are building more DSL lines. The growth of DSL has been significant on both consumer and data side. "Our capex is about P6 billion to P7 billion for fixed and slightly higher than P11 billion for the wireless," said the PLDT chair, who is also managing director and chief executive of First Pacific Co. Ltd, the parent firm of PLDT.

Last year, the company spent about P6 billion for PLDT and P11 billion for the mobile phone subsidiaries.

Smart's network of 32 switches and 3,904 base stations covers 86 percent of the country's 82 million population. Its nationwide coverage spans 1,039 cities and municipalities and switching capacity had been expanded to accommodate 14.3 million subscribers from 9.6 million subscribers at the end of 2002.

The goal, according to Pangilinan, was for the wireless business to cover the entire country and for every Filipino to own a PLDT handset, whether on fixed-line or wireless.

Analysts expected PLDT's share price this year to hit between P1,200 and P1,300 on the back of its sustained growth, although Pangilinan said that management believed the company's current share price remained undervalued.

Pangilinan said that apart from technological improvements, Smart and Piltel would continue to offer novelty schemes to attract more subscribers. Last year, Smart and Talk 'N Text launched various deals like the Smart Load and Pasa Load.

"Relentless innovation has brought us to where we are today and it is what will continue to propel us in the future. Because our innovations are life-changing and have been so wholeheartedly embraced by the market, we no longer see any barriers to growth. Our outstanding results for 2003 clearly demonstrate that we have found a winning formula for translating growth into profitability," said Napoleon Nazareno, PLDT president and chief executive officer.

Nazareno was elected concurrent Smart and PLDT president during last Thursday's board meeting where Pangilinan was appointed chair in place of Antonio Cojuangco, who remained as board member.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 20, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	24,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	17	13,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45.5	45.5	45	45.5	1,030,000
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	1,730
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39.5	39	39.5	52,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.54	0.57	0.54	0.56	210,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	26	26	141,600
Philippine National Bank	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	51,200
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	1,900
Security Bank Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	9,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	20	26.5	20	26.5	4,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2025	2035	2025	2035	1,020
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	34,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	160	189	160	160	26,370
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1500	1510	1500	1500	4,730
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	6,500
Digital Telecom Phils, Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	820,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	860	880	880	885	52,320
Ipeople Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	52,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	1,500,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	35,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.4	1.48	1.3	1.32	44,672,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	950	975	950	965	562,130
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.25	97,800
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	32.5	31.5	32.5	817,200
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.2	3.25	2,076,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	552,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	5,277,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	300,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	170,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	63,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.24	418,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	12,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.5	19.5	18.5	19.25	1,212,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56	55.5	56	726,300
San Miguel Corp. B	69	69.5	69	69.5	946,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.1	5.9	6	2,105,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
Ajo.Net Holdings, Inc.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.021	3,300,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.005	0.005	32,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	50,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	4,060,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	80,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	23.25	23.75	23.25	23.5	282,300
Global Equities Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	400,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	40,000
Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	548,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	50,000
Megaworld Corporation	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	2,182,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	8,480,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1	1	0.98	0.98	200,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	400,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.46	0.52	0.46	0.52	800,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	30,000
Manila Jockey Club	8	8	8	8	3,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.12	310,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.25	23.75	23.25	23.75	381,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	15,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	1,725,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.24	0.3	0.24	0.3	150,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,400,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	930,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.06	1,830,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	650,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.02	2.02	2	2	374,000
SM Development Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	13,000
SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	5.9	6.1	5.8	6.1	52,241,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	300,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	20,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	600,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	2,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	600,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	4,000,000
Pacifica	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	3,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	110,000

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PRO	97,624,000	546,155,430.00
Mining	3,920,000	299,800.00
OIL	7,110,000	78,450.00
GRAND TOTALS :	265,364,200	1,715,135,700.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	439.29	UP 4.47
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,308.13	UP 24.31
PRO	540.63	UP 3.97
Mining	1,551.57	UNCH 0.00
OIL	1.27	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	945.79	UP 2.57
Composite	1,488.02	UP 14.88

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28 nominees to vie for 15 PSE board seats

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TWENTY-EIGHT nominees will vie for 15 seats in the board of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) when it holds its elections by the middle of next month.

In a list submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), 10 incumbent directors were nominated, namely PSE chair Alicia Rita Arroyo, stockbrokers Marita Limlingan of Regina Capital Securities, William Ang of Astra Securities, Myron Timothy Papa of Papa Securities, Joseph Madrid of Philippine Equity Partners, and non-brokers PSE president Cayetano Paderanga Jr., former Philippine National Bank president Peter Favila, lawyer Francisco Lim of the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala and Cruz (Accra) law office, San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang, and WG&A president Enrique Aboitiz Jr.

Fifteen stockbrokers were also in the roster. These are Paul Wee of Accord Capital Equities, Yapster e-Conglomerate founder Felipe Yap, Eddie Gobing of Lucky Securities, Francis Chua of BA Securities, Edwin Luy of Triton Securities, Filomeno Francisco of AB Capital Securities, Robina Go of UBS Securities, Vivian Yuchengco of The First Resources Management & Securities Corp., Ismael Cruz of IGC Securities, Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities, Trinidad Kalaw of First Orient Securities, Robert Coyiuto Jr. of R. Coyiuto Securities, Ma. Erlinda Mañalac of First Integrated Capital, Francisco Villaroman of Securities Specialists Inc., and Joseph Roxas of Eagle Equities.

To complete the list, three new non-broker nominees were nominated. These are veteran public accountant Benjamin Punongbayan who is also the managing partner of Punongbayan-Araullo, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) president and general manager Winston Garcia and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. treasurer Annabelle Chua.

Of the present PSE board directors, Tomas Apacible, Vicente Ayllon, Rodolfo Cruz, Gregorio Kilayko and former PSE president Ernest Leung were not nominated.

Veteran brokers Arroyo, Yuchengco and Coyiuto are expected to launch their separate tickets.

SEC to review rules on new trading system

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) may study its rules again for the possible impact of an alternative trading system (ATS) on the market given concerns expressed by its US counterpart on "market fragmentation."

The local securities regulator also awaits the judgment of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) on the tax treatment of securities to be traded electronically and this has pushed back the launch of the ATS for sometime during the first quarter.

Sources said the launch was originally planned for January but may be deferred to March pending the BIR ruling.

ATS in the US or more popularly known as electronic communication networks (ECNs) account for almost a third of trading at the tech heavy Nasdaq market, a book by Roger Coffin and Philip Evans entitled "Blown to Bits1" stated.

Philip and Coffin said ECNs provide investors "with enhanced flexibility and reduced trading costs, and introduce competition to the established securities exchanges." Common examples are Instinet, Island, Bloomberg Tradebook, Archipelago, and Wolfex. They added that ECNs have fragmented the US equities markets by spreading around the centers of liquidity from the two traditional sources—New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq—transforming the securities industry to multiple pools of trading activity.

The Philippine Stock Exchange has balked at the creation of an ATS, saying it would duplicate the PSE's functions without being subjected to the same rigid requirements.

"Implementing an ATS as provided in the proposed rules will only reverse the efforts of the Manila and Makati stock exchanges to consolidate toward efficiency and enforcement of integrity," the PSE said earlier in a position paper.

"The proposed rules allow the operation of an 'exchange' with lenient rules and lower capitalization as certain aspects of an exchange are not required to be established. This set-up will create unfair competition and subject investors to greater risks," the PSE added. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

85% of BIR-monitored …

From page B1

covered about 200,000 business establishments nationwide last year.

Henares said most of the tax payers covered by the BIR's tax mapping drive either remitted inaccurate taxes or did not pay taxes at all.

With the help of the new programs, the BIR exceeded its revenue collection target in 2003 for the first time in years. Last year, the BIR collected P425.3 billion compared with the target of P424 billion. This year, the BIR is tasked to collect P477 billion.

Stocks seen moving up

From page B1

events, we expect the market to have an upward bias," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Philippines.

The Phisix rose by 4.9 percent to 1,488.02 as of the end of trading last Friday from 1,480.77 the previous week.

Leading the pack was dominant fixed line carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) with a P25 gain to P965 last week, buoyed by higher-than-expected net profits for 2003.

PLDT reported its net earnings surged 272 percent to P11.18 billion in 2003 from P3 billion, bolstered by cash cow and mobile phone operator Smart Communications Inc., which chipped in P16.12 billion in net revenues.

PLDT affiliate Pilipino Telephone Corp., however, fell 16.5 percent to P1.32 from P1.58 the previous week after PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan denied talk that its crown jewel Smart would be merged with Piltel to allow a backdoor listing of Smart through Piltel.

Investors, however, may continue to fish for PLDT stocks ahead of an expected strong performance this year and in 2005 given promising financial results last year.

Fund managers also said investors would watch the announcement of the government's budget shortfall for January to determine where interest rates will go this week. A rise in interest rates usually bode ill for stock investments as this increases costs for companies when they borrow for their expansion plans.

The government's budget deficit reached P198.7 billion at the end of 2003, a notch below the target of P202 billion, the Department of Finance earlier said.

The Philippine government's budget gap is the biggest problem the country's economy is facing, economists earlier said.

"If the deficit widens, there will be a problem because government will be forced to borrow domestically, which will push interest rates up. Abroad, it will be difficult to raise funds because of recent credit downgrades," a Hong Kong-based fund manager said.

Trading will also be shortened this week as the country celebrates the 18th anniversary of the Edsa People Power Revolution on Wednesday, Feb. 25. Trading resumes the following day. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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Forest Hills "A"	130,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	-	170,000
Manila Polo	2,100,000	2,300,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	230,00
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,00
Punta Fuego	400,000	pls. call
Orchard "B"	210,000	-
Riviera "B"	100,000	110,000
Riviera "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell Club	280,000	325,000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Sherwoods "B"	100,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	pls. call	-
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Baguio Country Club	650,000	700,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Camp John Hay	-	250,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	115,000	130,000
Cebu Country Club	1,100,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	150,000	200,000
Club Filipino	-	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	220,000	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	-	280,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	400,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	190,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	200,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,800,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	2,300,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	430,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	-	100,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	170,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	170,000	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	350,000
Quezon City Sports Club	Please Call	200,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	200,000
Rockwell	280,000	350,000
Spa & Lodge	520,000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,200,000	1,500,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,350,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	150,000	180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	300,000	340,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	750,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	140,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	-	250,000
Valley Golf	250,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	-

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Capitol Hills Golf CLub	-	140K
Celebrity Sports CLub		170K
Club Filipino	140K	130K
Eastridge Golf Club "B"	130K	-
Eagleridge Golf Club "B"	280K	-
Filipinas Golf & Country Club	300K	
Fontana "D"	30K	please call
Makati Sports Club "A"	150K	please call
Manila Golf Club (Ind)	please call	9.7M
Manila Golf Club (Corp.)	-	10.6M
Manila Polo Club	-	2.3M
Manila Southwoods "A"	please call	
Manila Southwoods "B"	530K	560K
Metro Club	80K	
Mimosa Ind.	-	120K
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	230K
Puerto Azul Beach Club	-	70K
Punta Fuego	-	500K (all in)
Quezon City Sports Club	-	please call
Riviera Golf Club "B"		120K
Rockwell Club	320K	280K
Royale Tagaytay	60K	
Sherwood Hills Golf Club "B"	-	100K
Sta. Elena Golf Club "A"		1.1M
Tagaytay Highlands	723K	
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Capitol Hills	160,000	130,000
Calatagan Golf Club A/B**	70,000	-
Club Filipino	-	120,000
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	290,000*	-
Eastridge A/B*	-	70,000/90,000*
Evercrest	-	Pls. Call
Fontana D/C*/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	-	9,500,000
Manila Polo	2,400,000	2,200,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Yacht Club	650,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	430,000	-
Metropolitan Club	110,000	70,000
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	150,000	120,000/250,000*
Mt. Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	300,000*	-
Orchard Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Punta Fuego	-	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*	120,000	100,000*
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	Pls. Call	-
Sherwoods A/B*/C**	220,000**	100,000*
Subic Bay Yacht Club "Corp"	Pls. Call	-
Tagaytay Country Club	-	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	630,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	-
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Valley Golf & CC	280,000	-
Valle Verde Indv.	140,000	-
Wack-Wack Golf	-	6,300,000

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OVER ₱880M IN BACK TAXES

BIR prepares for legal battle with SMC

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue said it is prepared for a possible legal battle with food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. over the issue of the P880 million in back taxes the BIR is asking SMC to pay.

BIR Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said the revenue agency's legal department already has arguments and documents to present should the issue go to court. She added that a court battle is likely to ensue if SMC insists on challenging the BIR's order on the back taxes.

The dispute between the BIR and SMC stemmed from the reclassification of the San Mig Light brand from being a separate brand to being a variant. The BIR said San Mig Light is a variant of the San Miguel Pale Pilsen brand and should therefore be imposed a higher tax. SMC, on the other hand, stressed that San Mig Light is not just a variant but a totally different brand.

From P10.25 per liter, San Mig Light is now imposed a tax of P13.61 after it was reclassified as a variant.

The P880 million in back taxes covers the period beginning 1999, when San Mig Light was introduced.

SMC argued that taxing San Mig Light as a variant would reverse its original classification as a separate brand that the BIR itself approved in 1999. The company cited a provision in the Tax Code that prohibits the modification of a tax ruling if the move will prejudice a taxpayer.

In response, Henares said the Tax Code allows modification of an erroneous tax ruling if it adversely affects the capability of the BIR to collect proper taxes.

She said SMC's advertisements and marketing posters for San Mig Light state that the product is a variant of San Miguel Pale Pilsen.

Henares said the BIR was in fact prodded to evaluate the classification of San Mig Light after some of its personnel saw the marketing posters of SMC bearing the statement that the product is a variant.

The BIR official said the revenue agency has given SMC a 15-day period to respond to the revenue agency's directive for the company to pay the back taxes. Henares added that the BIR expects SMC to bring the matter to the Court of Tax Appeals should the company fail to give positive response within the period.

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BUY MORE HARDWARE

Cement prices to go down

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL cement makers have until the end of the month to lower their prices before the Department of Trade and Industry takes steps to reduce the safeguard duty on imported cement.

"We have waited too long," Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said.

The official said prices of local cement have started to go down, but DTI continues to monitor the market.

CESAR Purisima

"They (local cement firms) have decreased prices in the areas where we expressed concern like Davao," he said. "But not yet to the price levels we want. We are continuing to talk with them and they are being cooperative."

He said if prices do not improve soon, the department might have to make a decision by the end of the month on whether to lower the safeguard duty.

The official was referring to a consolidated department order lowering the import duty on cement by P10 per 40-kilogram bag to P10.50 from P20.50.

Purisima noted the high prices of cement in Davao despite the presence of a cement manufacturing plant in the area.

DTI data show as of Feb. 12, a 40-kg bag was selling at a national average of P135—a slight increase from the January average of P134 per bag and the December average of P127 per bag. The data further show that prices in Metro Manila were falling to P125 from P130 in January.

Prices in the cement-producing areas are as follows:

In Region 1, going up to P135 per bag from P125 in January and P120 in December. In Region 3, going up to P129 from P125 in January and P123 in December.

In Region 7, going down to P135 from P143 in January and P137 in December. In Region 11, going down to P135 from P137 in January and P130 in December.

Purisima's predecessor, Manuel Roxas II, before he resigned last Dec. 10, stated that DTI reviewed the industry data and concluded that the recent price increases were not warranted by increases in factory inputs.

As a result, the DTI, under Roxas considered lowering the import duty by P5 per bag. The agency recently added another P5 to the proposed cut.

Has insurance...

From page B4

a much wider choice. By the way, half of the foreign companies have pulled out. This goes to show that not all foreign companies can compete with Filipinos in the Philippine market.

On the non-life side, the disbanding of the cartel has brought down premiums dramatically. For instance, fire insurance premiums today are about one-third what it used to be 10 years ago.

The big minus is this: gone are the days of huge profits for insurance companies, brokers and agents. Anyone who wants to stay in business has got to cut his operating expenses down to the bone.

But a comprehensive study of the effects of the liberalization of the insurance industry has got to be made. Preferably, this study has to be made by a professional group that is entirely independent of the industry. The study should be useful, not only to the industry itself, but also to the academe and, most of all, to those who think that liberalization, or globalization, is a sinister plot cooked by the rich First World. My bet is that the study will show that liberalization should be applied on the entire Philippine economy.

US firm . . .

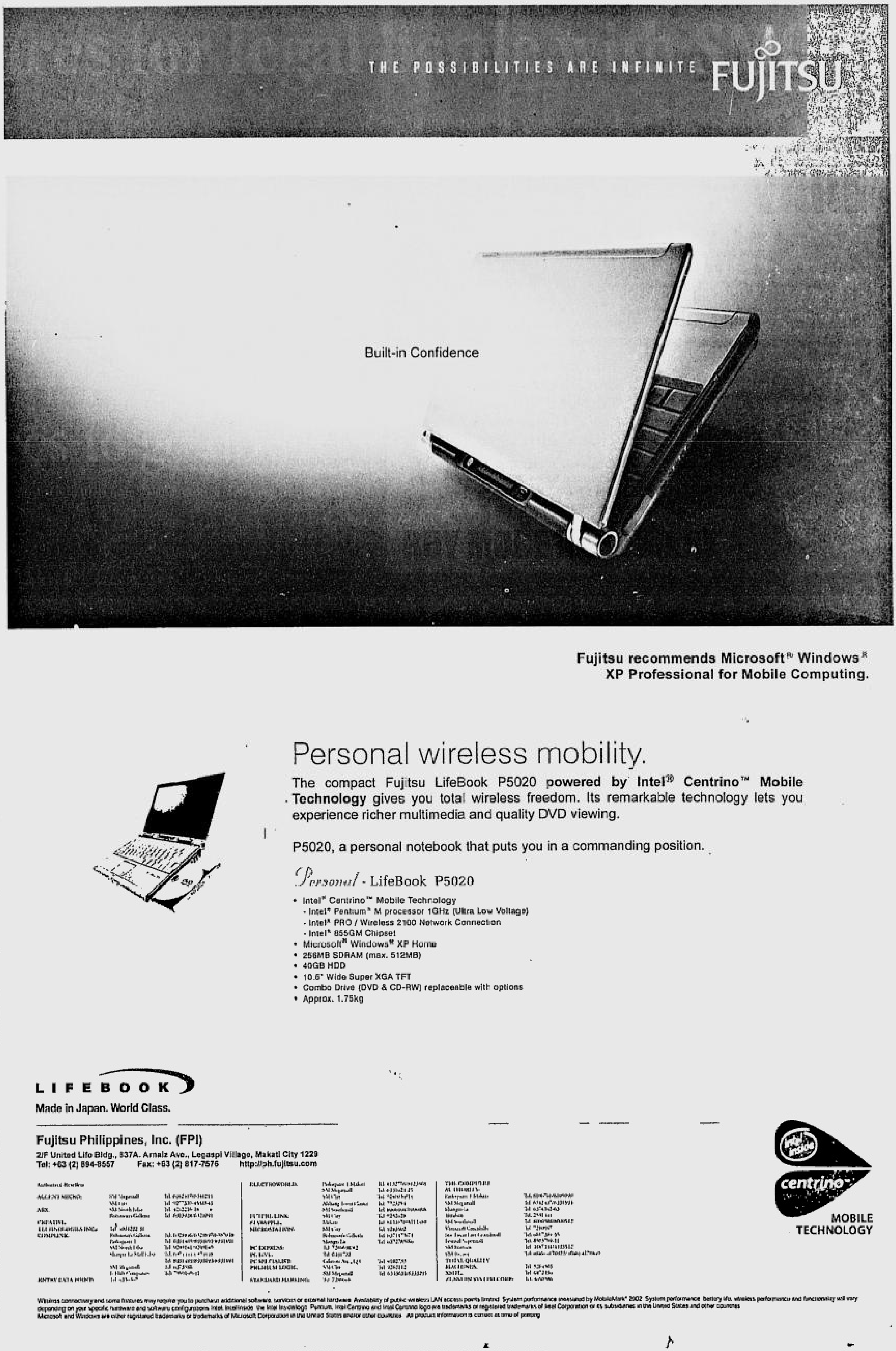
From page B3

"Perdue officials told me they would not be competitive against Thailand and Brazil if chicken were dressed and processed in the US."

"This project will put the Philippines in the chicken supply map of Japan, which consumes 1.7 million tons a year," Purisima said.

He said Japan imports 500,000 metric tons of chicken each year, bulk of which comes from Thailand. The Japanese market accounts for $1 billion or half of Thailand's chicken exports each year.

"It would be good for the country if we could get even a portion of that," the trade secretary said.



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centrino MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

How to make RP economy globally competitive

By John Gokongwei Jr.

AFTER an absence of 62 years, I am back in the school that I love where I finished my elementary school and high school. They say that England was built in the playing fields of Eton. I, meanwhile, was molded in the playing fields, classrooms, and chapels of San Carlos.

GOKONGWEI

In San Carlos, I formed memorable friendships with Mario Mendezona, Paquito Borromeo, Dr. John Lim, Dr. Roberto Tojong, Ramiro Valenzuela, Roberto Estevez, Totoy Avellana, Dr. Mike Celdran, Chiling Garcia, Guillermo Gervacio, Jesus Go, Pepito Moras, and many others.

I learned from the Society of the Divine World the values that have guided me through the years.

First, discipline. I remember Father Smith, the head of discipline, punishing me for running past his office one day while classes were ongoing. The rule was never to run, but to walk slowly along corridors. My punishment was to stand in the corner of his office for three hours with my arms outstretched as if waiting to be crucified. He may have been a terror, but he taught me the value of discipline.

Second, love for learning. While I excelled in Math and Science, my favorite subjects were English, History, and Music taught by Fathers Krueger and Gries. I even learned to play the flute, a skill which I have—with deep regret—since forgotten. I remember getting my first case of hives during our elementary school graduation rites. I was gunning for the gold and was very nervous that I would not get it. Fortunately, I did. The second time I got hives was when the girl I wanted to marry did not respond positively at first. Today, she is my wife, Elizabeth.

Charity

Third, a Christian education. I remember attending a 5-minute prayer everyday. In fact, I was an altar boy. From San Carlos, I learned the importance of charity. Today, the Gokongwei Brothers Foundation gives every year a sum equivalent to 3 percent of JG Summit's profit to educate talented Filipinos from all over the archipelago in engineering and the sciences, and to support education through donations to deserving institutions. Our school offers free advanced technical programs like industrial electronics, process instrumentation, and others because we believe in the importance of practical sciences to bring this country further.

While in San Carlos, I never thought I would ever be an entrepreneur. I wanted to become a fighter pilot instead. But a series of events—the death of my father and the outbreak of the War soon after—forced me to drop out of school, and make a living selling candles, soap and thread in Cebu. I was 15 and I was supporting my family. Now, we are running an airline, Cebu Pacific.

Since then, I have not stopped working. From selling these commodities, I have graduated to more complex businesses. JG Summit, the company I founded, is engaged in seven core businesses. These are food manufacturing, textile manufacturing, petrochemicals, real estate, telecommunications, airlines, and banking. We are now the only Filipino multinational with operations in China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and this year, Vietnam. And within five years, we will fly Cebu Pacific Air to the US and Europe, and make sure that the word "Cebu" is on everybody's lips.

My 62 years as an entrepreneur operating in many industries across Asia have given me a unique understanding of how business operates in different countries. I would like to share with you what I have learned.

The question most asked of me as a businessman is whether the Filipino entrepreneur will survive in the new world? The answer to this is very important because we are faced with globalization through WTO and Afta, where trade barriers will come tumbling down, and we will have to fight much stronger rivals.

Let me be more specific. We are now facing a preview of what the WTO and Afta will bring. The Afta lowers taxes of almost all imports to 5 percent and below. This means that cheap imports will soon flood our countries—rubber tires, garments, textiles and garments from Indonesia, petrochemicals from Singapore and Thailand, and many other products from various countries—making many local industries unviable. It also means that multinational companies will continue to move their factories overseas along with jobs, where they can manufacture more cheaply and efficiently.

In fact, Thailand can produce candies at a much cheaper price than here. With the almost-zero trade barriers, branded candies, some of them Filipino in origin, will be made there and exported to us. This will be a very common scenario in the future if we do not change. If this continues, we will be a country that creates nothing and imports everything.

I compare the Philippines to Thailand because of our similarities. We have almost the same population size. We have 86 million people, Thailand has 62 million. We share the same racial mix. We share the same abundant natural resources of fertile soil, palm oil, coconuts, and others. But why does the average Thai earn more than twice the average Filipino?

Advantages

Therefore, the answer to this question—Can the Filipino slug it out in the boxing ring of the global economy?—is maybe. We may have a productive and educated labor force, but we do not have an effective entrepreneurial class who are the main drivers of growth in any country. Who else will create jobs after all? Sadly, in the Philippines, we have too few entrepreneurs and the few we have are wary of foreign competition.

We can only grow entrepreneurs and become a contender like Manny Pacquiao—a Filipino I admire immensely for being a world champ—if risks are lessened and the following conditions are put in place.

First, access to capital, both short-term and long-term.

In Thailand where we operate a very profitable food manufacturing business, we borrow at rates as low as 2.3 percent for short-term loans. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, we can only borrow at 7 to 8 percent. This means that the average Thai businessman is able to borrow money for a third the cost of his Filipino counterpart.

Even more important is access to long-term peso financing or financing payable in five years and longer. In Thailand, entrepreneurs can borrow at 5 percent for long-term. This allows them to build competitive industry and develop tourism necessary for any country's development. That is why Thailand's tourism industry is booming while ours is not progressing as well even if our beaches are more beautiful than theirs.

Here, there is a shortage of this type of financing. My recommendation is for companies to issue bonds in small denominations—say P5,000 with a maturity of at least five years—which will help finance industries, commercial and tourism projects and at the same time allow the average Filipino to partake in the economic fruits of such investments. For example, a housewife can choose to invest her money in a retail bond that will give her a higher return on her peso than what she is now earning.

In order to deepen the domestic capital market, government can create an institutional structure that will review tightly the issuance of bonds and keep taxes on such instruments at a minimum. The structure must also allow bonds to be traded like equity so that investors are assured of liquidity.

Second, better labor management. Our wages are competitive to Thailand's but it is difficult for many local entrepreneurs to forecast their labor costs. For example, there may be times when labor may ask more than what the entrepreneur can give, hurting both of them in the end. Or when an employee does not share the same vision as the entrepreneur and becomes a liability to the whole organization.

I would like to recommend that the following law be passed that will please both labor and the entrepreneur. To give an extra one to six months separation pay on top of the present legislated separation pay—but to allow entrepreneurs to let go of people without any questions asked. This provides sufficient compensation for an employee to tide him over while he looks for another source of income. But this also allows the entrepreneur to be flexible when his business is bad. Furthermore, when an entrepreneur is allowed this flexibility, he is likely to hire more people, resulting in higher employment in general.

Third, cheaper power. In Thailand, our operations can buy power at P3.50 per kilowatt-hour. Here, we pay P7 per kilowatt-hour.

But we cannot fault Meralco and other power distributors for charging high rates because they have to buy power at a high rate as well. Therefore, I would like to recommend another win-win situation. Allow entrepreneurs to build power plants to supply their own power needs and then to sell excess power to each other within a certain boundary. This way Meralco need not lower their rates and business can bring down their costs.

Just to give you an example of how we can cut down power costs. We have built power plants for two of our power-dependent businesses—petrochemicals and textiles. We did this because high power costs had killed most of our competitors in both industries.

With our own power plants, we can generate power at P2.75 per kilowatt-hour. Imagine the savings Filipino entrepreneurs could generate at those rates! Besides, we will also be able to produce enough power to avoid the forecast power shortage in 2006.

Fourth, agricultural productivity management. In the past, we produced rice and sugar for export. Today, we import both. Meanwhile, Thailand is one of the largest rice exporters in the world, and they can produce sugar at half our costs. Why is that?

Agriculture can be a pillar of our economy just as it is in Thailand. After all, many of our industries need the output from farms. We need sugar for candies, bakery products, and soft drinks. We need corn for the feed of our chickens and hogs. If only we could produce this at a cost comparable to Thailand, we could trim our costs, generate more profit and even pass some of this on to the consumer.

But more importantly, our farms must be geared to compete so that we can create jobs.

Finally, foreign exchange management. The fluctuation of the peso against the dollar over the past few years has ruined many businesses and has scared many entrepreneurs who need to borrow for projects.

In July 1997, at the start of the last Asian crisis, the average rate for one US dollar was 29.48 Thai baht and 29.33 Philippine peso, about the same. Today, the baht has devalued to 39 baht to the dollar but the peso is inching its way to P56 versus the dollar.

The Filipino businessman who borrowed a dollar worth P29 in July, 1997 must pay P56.35 (Friday's all-time low closing rate) for the same dollar today.

Favorable conditions

In sum, if we had the same favorable conditions as Thailand—access to low-interest financing, long-term financing through bond issues, realistic labor management, lower cost of power, more effective agricultural programs, and a more stable peso—we would entice a lot of entrepreneurs to invest. This will improve the investment climate dramatically.

With this investment environment, we will create an entrepreneurial class that will be more willing to take risks and therefore more prepared to take on the competition of the new world. I have refrained from speaking about graft and corruption, peace and order, population management, and poor infrastructure. That these must be solved is obvious.

After all, it is as simple and clear as human nature. It is important for entrepreneurs to estimate our risks and cost structures before we invest.

To end, I believe that there can be a better future for the Philippines and the Filipino. But we must first face reality. We cannot hide from the changes brought by the WTO and Afta and must prepare by creating a class of Filipino entrepreneurs who will be able to compete with the best in the world. Entrepreneurs will create jobs and let me be clear in saying that no matter who the next president is, job creation must be top priority. I repeat, job creation must be top priority.

I hope that these humble suggestions gleaned from 62 years of experience give the government an idea of how the mind of an entrepreneur works, and hopefully bold and far-reaching reforms can be implemented to make the Philippine economy globally competitive, and to make the Philippine future brighter, more optimistic and exciting.

(Speech delivered by Mr. Gokongwei when he received a doctorate honoris causa from the San Carlos University in Cebu last Jan. 29.)

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*Che Che Rivera,
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WB pledges $1.6B in aid to Vietnam

HANOI—The World Bank has pledged a total aid of $1.6 billion for 2004 and 2005 to Vietnam to speed up economic reform and help lift living standards in a country where about a third of its 80 million people live in poverty.

Despite having the fastest growing economy in Southeast Asia, averaging 7 percent a year, Vietnam relies on foreign help to build schools, clinics, roads and power grids.

"Looking at the challenges ahead, the World Bank is committing continued assistance to Vietnam," Klaus Rohland, director of the World Bank in Vietnam said in a statement.

Last December, other international donors, including the Asian Development Bank, Japan and the European Union, agreed to provide nearly $2.84 billion to Vietnam this year.

Despite concerns about the country's human rights record and worries how the money is disbursed, the World Bank said the rise in donor aid reflected confidence in Vietnam's development.

The communist country's campaign to restructure state firms since 1992, including privatizing, merging or dissolving has mainly skirted major companies and often fails to reach annual targets.

State media said Vietnam privatized 317 firms in 2003, part of a plan to restructure around 2,600 companies between 2003 and 2005. Only 77.2 percent of the 4,800 state firms made a profit last year. *Reuters*

Disney open to really 'spectacular bid'

LOS ANGELES—Walt Disney Co. chair and chief executive Michael Eisner, facing a looming takeover bid from Comcast Corp. and under fire from dissident shareholders, said the board was open to a "really spectacular" offer but would not give away the company.

Comcast, the largest US cable company, last week made an all-stock offer for Disney currently worth $48 billion.

The board turned down the offer as too low and Eisner, interviewed by Larry King on cable channel CNN, declined to name a price for Disney.

"Ah, please!" he said, adding that he would not give away sports channel ESPN and other premier brands.

Eisner faced criticism from some callers, including one who said that Disney's California Adventure, the company's second Southern California park, only had one good ride.

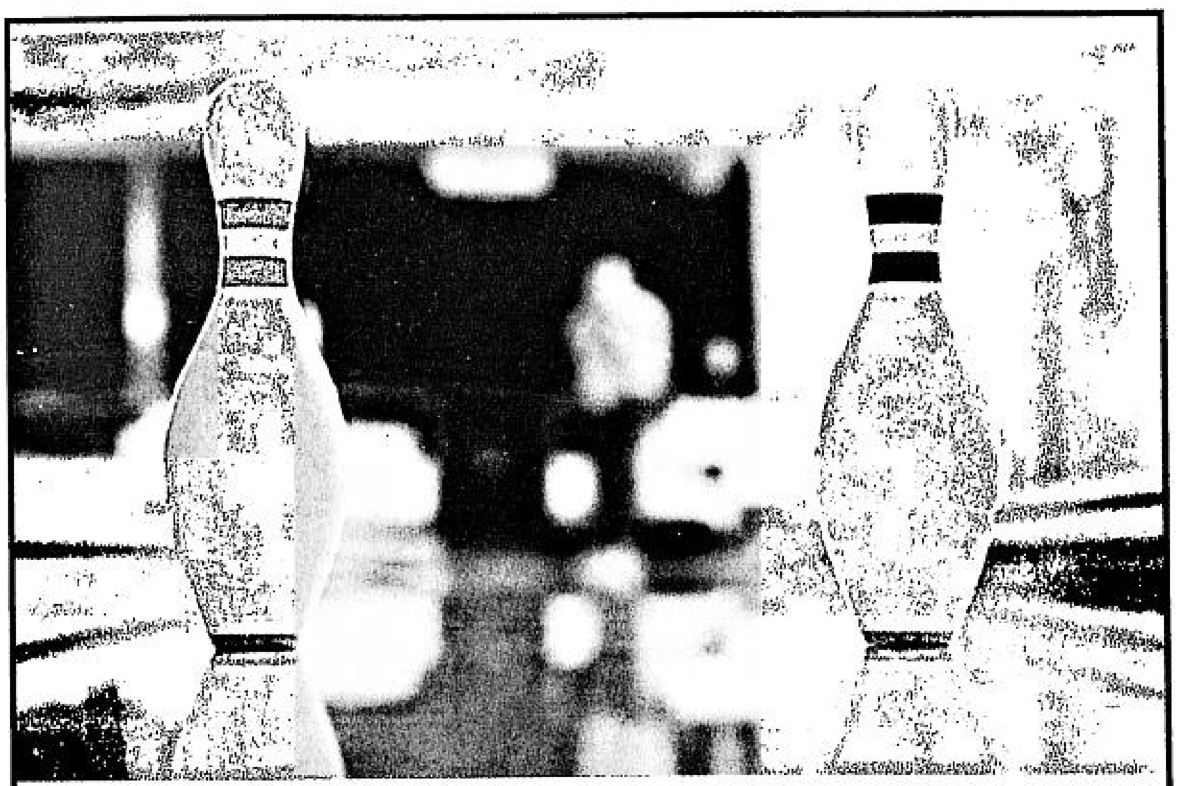
"Obviously I don't agree," Eisner said, listing attractions added since the park opened in 2001.

Eisner said he believed he had the full support of the Disney board in the face of the Comcast bid and criticism from dissident shareholder Roy Disney.

Comcast is also a Disney customer and is negotiating a new contract with ESPN.

ESPN cut deals on Thursday with Comcast rivals Cox Communications Inc. and Charter Communications Inc., and Eisner said he would like to charge Comcast more.

"Just because I feel that way," he said. *Reuters*



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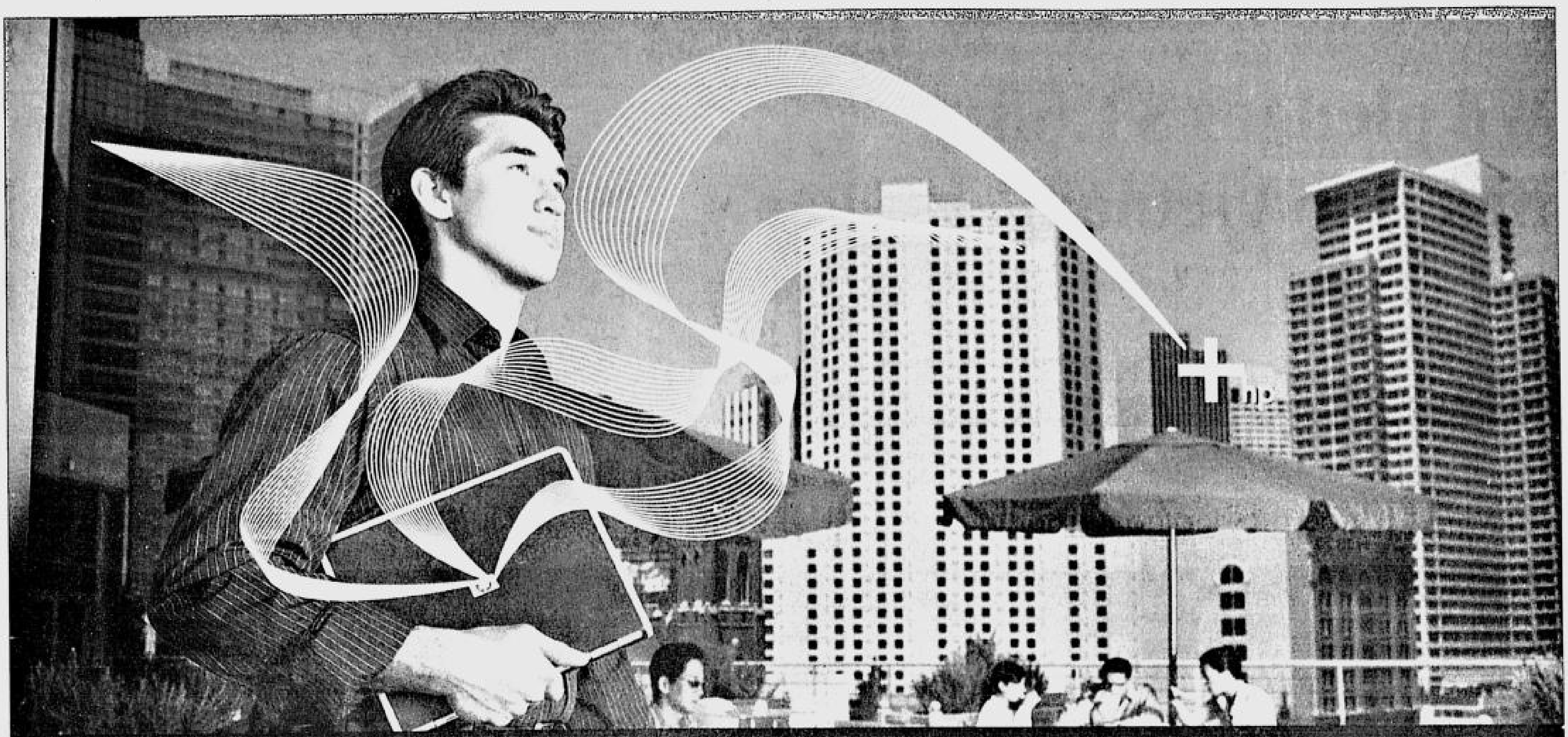

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BAYANTEL BETTER THAN EVER. THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL.

BayanTel CEO Forum | Outsourcing Beyond Call Centers: Its Economic Impact on the Philippines and the Region

Offshore outsourcing opens the stage for everyone, especially the Philippines

OFFSHORE outsourcing is one great opportunity for developing countries such as the Philippines but the country should think beyond "call centers" to fully maximize the value and many potentials of this new business development sweeping Asia.

This was the focus of the talk given by Reginald Chua, editor of The Asian Wall Street Journal, in BayanTel's CEO Forum, held February 11 at the Makati Shangri-La.

He told business executives who attended the forum to face the challenges of outsourcing, which is according to him is a "dramatic revolution" and a "completely different way of doing things" today.

"People are just beginning to understand how to use what has been around for five or six years," he said. "Offshore outsourcing is moving business offices around the world. The wealth and opportunities will go to Asia. And I urge you to think way beyond call centers. Think of any process that doesn't need face-to-face contact."

He said the "value of information in the business process is growing" and one business opportunity that can be looked into with regard to outsourcing is the huge healthcare industry in the developed countries such as the US that demand data handling.

He also said 3.3 million jobs in the U.S. will move offshore by 2015. "Offshore outsourcing opens the stage for everyone, especially the Philippines. What we should do is to optimize brain power."

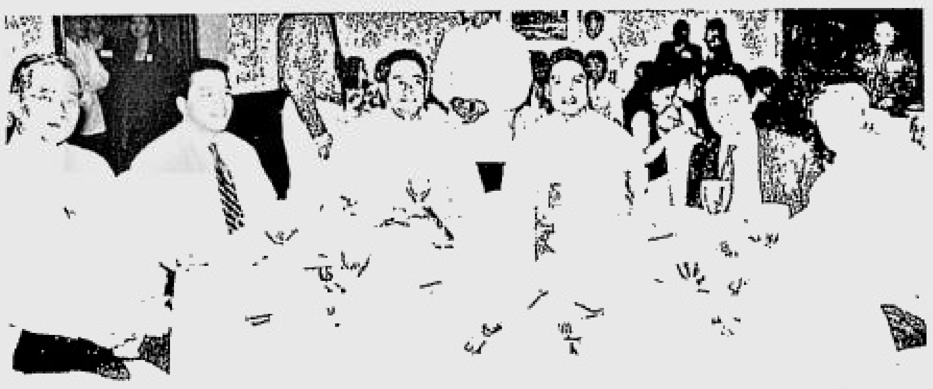
He also said the Philippines has a huge advantage in capturing larger markets for outsourcing. "You have very good and skilled manpower. You have good accountants, bankers, well-educated and smart people with high proficiency in the English language."

He further added that for the country to remain competitive, it should take offshore outsourcing seriously and to grab the chance to get more investments for the country in this area.

Raquel P. Gomez

BayanTel CEO Forum
Outsourcing Beyond Call Centers:

AWSJ circulation director Cynthia Zhao, AWSJ Managing Director Winnie Wong, Mr. Reginald Chua, Mr. Eugenio Lopez III, Mr. Tunde Fafunwa, Nortel Networks managing director Antonio Pio de Roda, and Asiagate Networks president Andy delos Reyes.



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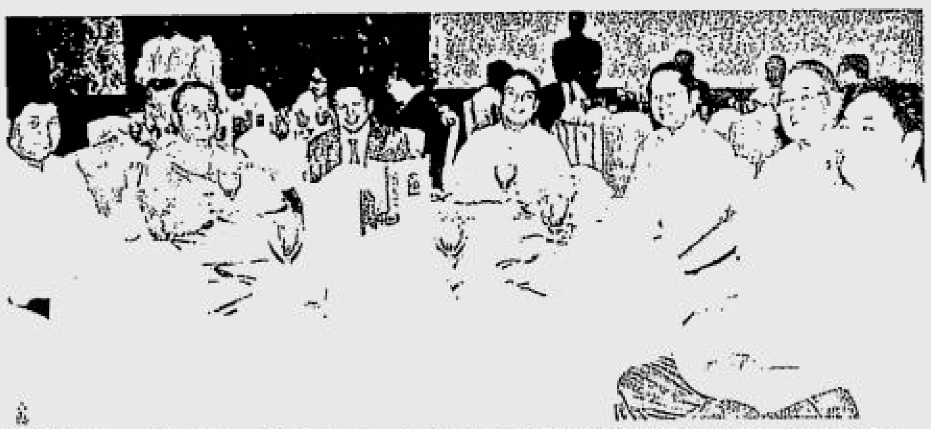
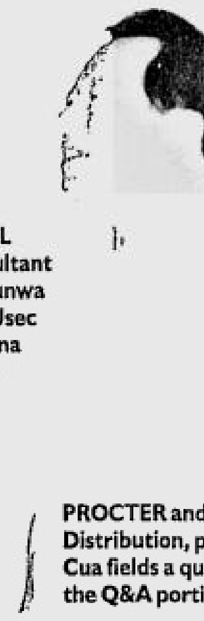


PSBANK president Pascual Garcia, Insular Savings Bank EVP Edilberto D. Ibasco, Jr, Eastern Petroleum CEO Fernando Martinez, Banco De Oro VP Charles Rodriguez, Adtel President Regie Casas, BayanTel board member Jake Almeda Lopez.

First Gas CEO Peter Garrucho, Philippine National Bank Chairman Francisco Dizon, Chinatrust chairman William Go, and SITA president Ted Huliganga

Tridel Technologies president Robert Deluria, Pacific Internet chairman Renato Yap, American Data Exchange's Jay Nelson, Philippine Star Business Editor Tony Katigbak, Benpres Group PR head Boo Chanco, and ANC Business News head Ces Drilon.

BAYANTEL chief consultant Tunde Fafunwa with DTI Usec Virgilio Pena



PROCTER and Gamble Distribution, president, Johnip Cua fields a question during the Q&A portion.

BayanTel and ASWJ: Partners on Youth Empowerment

BAYANTEL is the newest partner of Asian Wall Street Journal for its National Students Program or NSP, a youth empowerment program that aims to better prepare student leaders for tomorrow's real life challenges.

The NSP is an educational program that reaches out to graduate students and senior-year majors in business disciplines in leading universities in the country by providing them with a valuable learning tool - a copy of the AWSJ. The features, news stories and commentaries in AWSJ complement academic theory with important news and statistical information unavailable in textbooks, thus bringing theory to life.

Mr. Junie Pama, BayanTel vice president for corporate and business markets said: "We are pleased to partner with AWSJ on this significant project. We recognize that by making important information accessible to our young students today would shape their perspective on how to better contribute in the economic development of our country."

In recognition of BayanTel's participation in the program, AWSJ presented a plaque of appreciation during the BayanTel CEO Forum held last February 11, 2004 at the Makati Shangri-La.

Tel CEO Forum
inald Chua
BAYANTEL

BayanTel vice-chairman and chief executive officer Eugenio Lopez III accepted the plaque from Ms. Winnie Wong, Managing Director of AWSJ. Mr. Lopez was joined by BayanTel chief consultant Tunde Fafunwa (center).

Outsourcing is key to keeping costs down

THE ERA of Internet has allowed work to be done practically anywhere in the globe in real time. With the technology and infrastructure, particularly in communications, this has resulted in companies outsourcing business process, customer contact, consultancy, and content development.

Business process outsourcing may include application systems, development, database design and management, finance and accounting services, supply chain management, marketing and sales, logistics management and human resource development.

Customer contact outsourcing includes voice processing, data warehousing, sales force automation, Web-based customer care and mobile solutions.

Consultancy outsourcing includes project management, Internet systems development and systems integration.

Content development outsourcing can be in animation, engineering and design, graphics design, remote education, software development, transcriptions and website development.

In the country, the more popular sample of outsourcing is the call center.

Outsourcing is fast gaining popularity in business capitals worldwide. McKinsey & Co. expects this market to reach $142.2 billion by 2008.

BAYANTEL CEO FORUM :

Adding value beyond reliable service

THE BAYANTEL CEO Forum held last February 11 at the Makati Shangri-La was a success, gauging from the high turnout of expected CEOs and positive feedback from guests.

Actuallty, the BayanTel CEO Forum was brought about by the company's desire to reach out to key decision makers of its corporate clients and add more value from the business partnership beyond providing reliable service.

"This is a parallel activity to our Club BayanTel, wherein we invite executives from our clients to join us for activities designed to deepen our personal bonds with them", shared Junie Pama, vice president for corporate and business markets.

Thus, BayanTel joined hands with The Asian Wall Street Journal. the premiere business paper in the region, to come up with a forum to discuss relevant and timely issues tailor fit for the busy chief executive

Launched in 1976, The Asian Wall Street Journal provides news and analysis of global business developments for an Asian audience. It has been consistently voted the "most important business reading" by Asia's business leaders in the biennial Asian Businessman Readership Survey (ABRS).

"Our partnership with AWSJ fits our objectives nicely as we recognize how our CEO's rely on AWSJ to provide them with a fresh perspective of business issues being confronted by businesses globally and in particular, the Asia Pacific region."

Mr. Pama shared that with the good feedback from the forum, BayanTel will continue to develop more Club BayanTel and CEO-targeted activities.

"We hope to make BayanTel a reputable brand name not only because of the reliable service we provide but also because of the value we deliver to our clients via learning activities and other relationship building programs.

SPEAKER PROFILE

Reginald Chua

Editor

The Asian Wall Street Journal

REGINALD Chua is the editor of The Asian Wall Street Journal, responsible for the paper's news operations.

He became editor in August 1997, just as the Asian financial crisis was sweeping the region, and steered the paper's award-winning coverage of that upheaval and its aftermath. The following years have been no less tumultuous, with The Asian Wall StreetJournal covering such key stories as the growth of China's economic and political might, the rising threat of terrorism in South and Southeast Asia, and the impact of SARS. During his tenure as editor, staff at the paper have won a Pulitzer Prize, an Overseas Press Club of America award, and several honors from the Society of Publishers in Asia, including the award for excellence in English-language newspapers for three consecutive years.

During that time, The Asian Wall Street Journal also significantly expanded its coverage of the impact of technology on business and society with the launch of a monthly section, Technology Journal, and the addition of a daily section called Networking covering technology, media, marketing and management issues. Reg also oversaw the development and launch of a third Friday section called Personal Journal, covering personal finance and lifestyle issues.

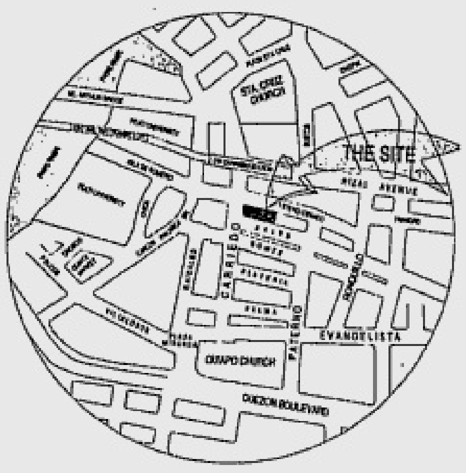
Reg joined The Asian Wall Street Journal in 1993, serving first as its Manila correspondent before moving to Vietnam to open the paper's Hanoi bureau in October 1995. He moved to Hong Kong in early 1997 as deputy managing editor. Prior to joining The Asian Wall Street Journal, Reg worked in Singapore for the Reuters news agency and the then Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (now MediaCorp News Pte Ltd); he was also the Manila correspondent for The Straits Times newspaper.

A native of Singapore, Reg served in the Singapore Armed Forces and worked briefly as a computer programmer. He holds a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and received a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Chicago. He graduated from high school in the Philippines and is married with two children.

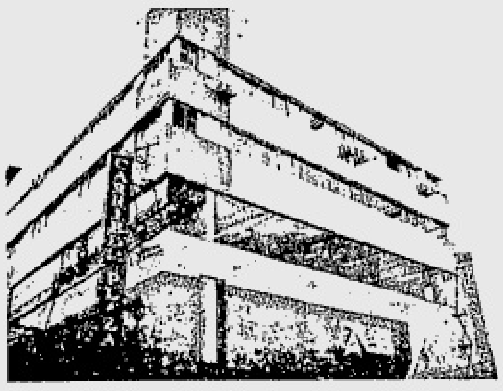
SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW...

Finally, starting February 23, 2004 the long queues and sweltering heat are gone. In the comforts of air-conditioned, spacious seating areas and accessible facilities, NBI clearance applicants can apply for clearances at the NEW NBI CLEARANCE CENTER at Carriedo Plaza Bldg., Carriedo corners Estero Cegado and Sales Streets, Sta. Cruz, Manila. An NBI clearance can be secured in thirty (30) minutes to one (1) hour from the time of application in Carriedo Center and the Regional and Provincial offices. At the malls, for renewal, clearances can be secured in ten (10) minutes.

All clearance facilities at the NBI Main Office are now transferred to this new facility.



VICINITY MAP



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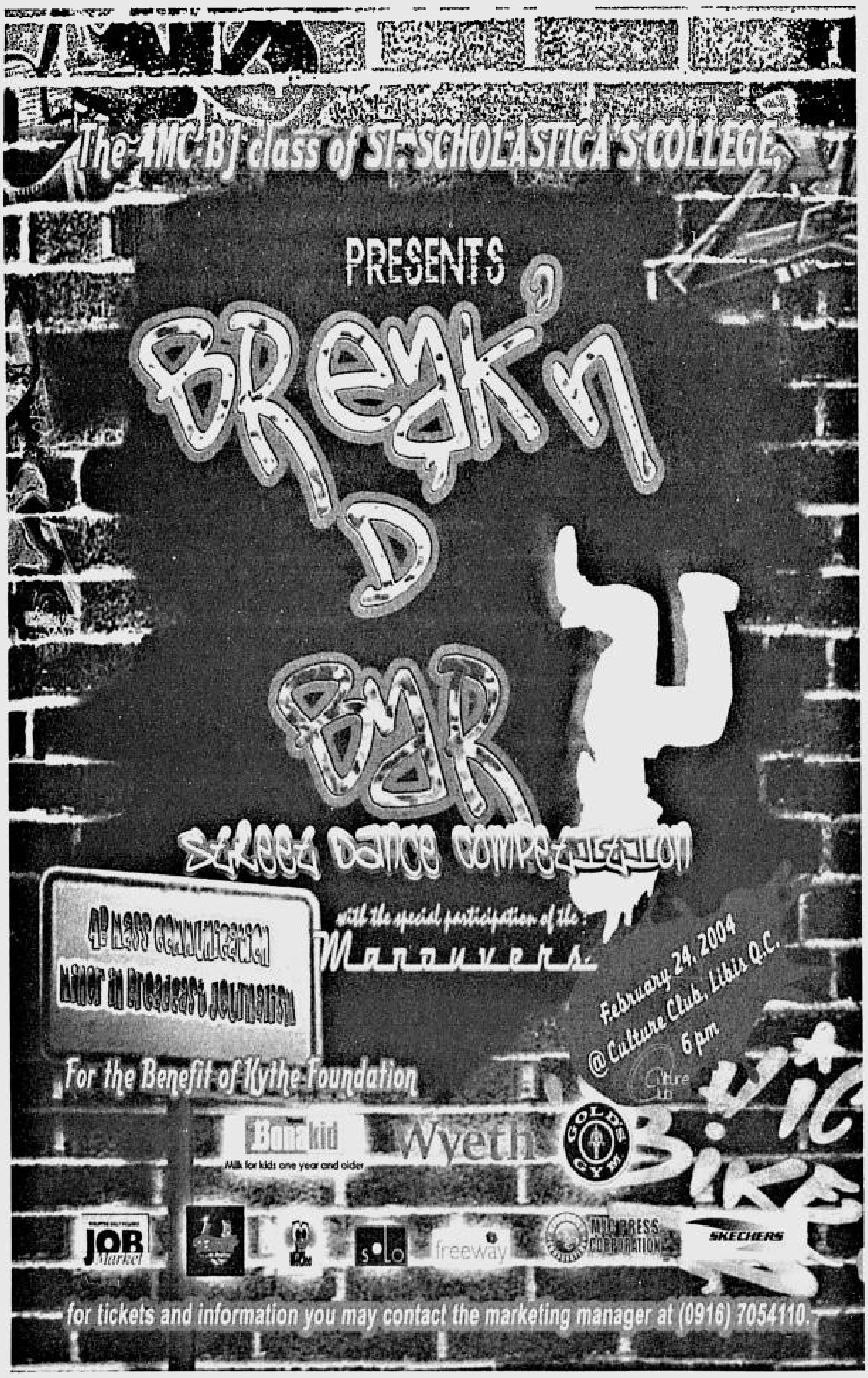
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Contracting of Consulting Services for PHI/00/G33 - Capacity Building to Remove Barriers to Renewable Energy in the Philippines (CBRED) Project

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites local consultants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the various subcontracts of the project "UNDP-GEF-DOE PHI/01/G33-Capacity Building to Remove Barriers to Renewable Energy in the Philippines (CBRED) Project".

The CBRED Project aims to reduce the annual growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions by replacing part of the current fossil fuel use in the Philippines through the removal of major barriers to renewable energy (RE) that will lead to the development and widespread utilization of renewable energy systems / applications. Specific objectives of the project includes: (1) strengthening the capacity of relevant Government of the Philippines (GOP) agencies to formulate, enact, and implement sound new and renewable energy (NRE) policies; (2) providing NRE information for targeted audiences to build markets; (3) increasing coordination among organization concerned with NRE; (4) assisting market penetration of NRE in remote off-grid communities; and (5) improving quality of NRE technologies and systems.

The project is subdivided into six (6) components, namely: (1) Policy, Planning, and Institutional Capacity Building, (2) Market Service Institutionalisation, (3) Information and Promotion Services, (4) RE Initiatives Delivery and Financing Mechanisms, (5) Training Program, and (6) RE Technology Support.

To be able to attain said objectives, the project requires the services of subcontractors who shall undertake each of the following components:

A. Contract 1 – RE Green Energy Rating Program
Among the promotional programs that will be developed under the CBRED project is the Green Energy Rating Program (Green-E), which is an environmental rating scheme, the concept of which is similar to the Malcolm Bladrige National Quality Award, the Energy Globe Competition award for Sustainability, or the Don Emilio Abello Energy Efficiency Award but focuses on the magnitude of realizing the potential of existing or completed RE projects.

B. Contract 2 – Technical Assistance to Manufacturers of RE Equipment
This component addresses the technical barriers that hinder the promotion and utilization of RE technologies / systems, which includes the lack of standards as well as testing, verification and quality control measures that make product standards enforcement difficult. Activities under this component are geared towards upgrading the quality and efficiency of locally manufactured RE systems and equipment.

C. Contract 3 – RE Engineering Service Industry Development
Major activities under this component are to develop a technical support program and a registration program for the development of local RE Engineering Service Industry. This component seeks to address the need to enhance local expertise and promote those that have proven capacities and capabilities in RE system management, which will, as a consequence, build stronger consumer confidence on RE systems and technologies and assure consumer protection.

Bidders may submit proposal for any one, any combination, or all of the above-mentioned contracts.

For interested parties, Bid Documents (Eligibility Requirements, Instructions to Bidders and Terms of Reference) may be secured personally, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP 500.00 for each Contract from the following address:

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
7th Floor, NEDA sa Makati Building
106 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati City
Tel. No. (632) 892 0611 loc. 275
Fax No. (632) 816-4061 / 893-9598
Email Address : bc_admin.ph@undp.org

The abovementioned Bid Documents will be released to all interested participants starting **1 March 2004 to 5 March 2004 only**. The Bid Documents shall contain all instructions on the rules, procedures, dates and other schedules for the pre-bid conference and opening of bid envelopes, as well as further details on the scope of services required.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all the bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the most advantageous offer to the UNDP, for and in behalf of the Department of Energy. UNDP assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ETHELIND B. CAPUNO**
Manager, DSSC

(PDI - Feb. 23, 2004)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of **The Prudent Choice Insurance Agency Corporation (the "Corporation")**, which shortened the term of its corporate existence to end on **August 30, 2003** and thereby dissolving the said corporation on said date, has been approved by its Board of Directors and shareholders at duly constituted meetings both held on **July 30, 2003.**

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present same at the Corporation's principal place of business located at AIC Center, Escolta, Manila.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) **ETHELWOLDO E. FERNANDEZ**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI - Feb. 23, March 1 & 8, 2004)

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- **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** from banks and financial institutions;
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- Special Section for **ENTREPRENEURS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY.**

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Ben Noynay is the President of InLine Mentors, Inc., the company that owns the master license of Action International Business Coaching Franchise in the Philippines. He is also the concurrent President, Chairman & Managing Director of several companies both in Australia & in the Philippines. He has more than 20 years combined experience in education and in business both locally and internationally.

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Mr. Mario Sanchez is the author of the #1 Bestseller PINOYBISNES Series Books. He operated and managed a successful design and advertising business for nine (9) years in Los Angeles. He is a Certified Public Accountant in the United States. In the Philippines, Mr. Sanchez has an international distribution business. He specializes in consulting with small enterprises. He is a banker, financial adviser and a small business counselor.

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(PDI - Feb. 23, 2004)

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(National Irrigation Administration)
PUROK BLG. VII
TANGGAPAN NG ENHENYERONG PANLALAWIGAN NG PATUBIG
(Office of the Provincial Irrigation Officer)
Sibulan Negros Oriental
Tel Number (035) 225-1480 (035) 419-8541 Fax No (035) 225-2735

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION AND BIDDING

The NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION invites interested accredited preparer-consultants to apply for prequalification to bid and submit sealed bids to conduct/undertake the hereunder activity:

I. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), prepare environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Engineering Geological and Geohazard Assessment Risk (EGGAR) and other corollary activities with the objective of securing Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the Daum Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (SRIP) that is located at Barangay Magsaysay, Daum, Negros Oriental.

Prequalification forms may be secured from NIA, Sibulan, Negros Oriental upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P 500.00) starting February 16, 2004 to March 01, 2004

Deadline for submission of the complete prequalification documents is on March 08, 2004

Preparer/Consultants and Contractor will be notified on the results of the prequalification

Site inspection and pre-bidding for EIA/EIS/EGGAR preparation will be on March 30, 2004 in the morning after which Bid documents will be issued to prequalified bidders

Shortlisted bidders concurred by Asian Development Bank (ADB) will be invited for submission of their Technical and Financial Proposals in two (2) separate sealed envelopes. Deadline for submission is on April 30, 2004 at 10:30 a.m. to the BAC, NIA, Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

Qualified firms on their technical proposals will be notified and invited for the evaluation of their financial proposal.

Evaluation will be based on ADB's Quality and Cost Base Selection System

The NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any of the above item/s to any bidders whose bid/s is/are considered the most advantageous to NIA and/or government

THE BIDDING COMMITTEE
(Sgd.) DEXTER G. PATROCINIO
Provincial Irrigation Officer

(PDI--Feb 16, 19, 23 & 26, 2004)

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OBITUARIES

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12:00 noon
Day before publication

Our Beloved

Dr. Reynaldo "Rene" S. Bordador, M.D.

of Veterans Memorial Medical Center &
Jesus Delgado Memorial Hospital

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 20, 2004 at the age of 62.

His loving wife **Carmelita "Baby" Villena**; sons **Dr. Gerard Louie** (and his fiancé **Jeanne Salanga**), and **Dennis Patrick**; father **Apolinar E. Bordador**; father-in-law **Dr. Pedro Villena**; sisters and brother **Leonila & Proceso Santos, Florencia vda. de Lasam, Soledad & Dr. Jose Ma. Viray, Fe & Alejandro Z. Barin, Rosario vda. de Guzman, Drs. Adoracion & Petronio Alava, Apolinar & Benilda** and **Dolores & Lope Yuvienco**; brothers and sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, other relatives & friends request fervent prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the East Tierra Homes Social Hall, L. Estrada St., Tierra Bella Subdivision, Quezon City.

His remains will be cremated after the Mass on Tuesday, February 24, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. at the Our Lady of Consolation Parish, Alondras St., Mira-Nila Homes, Quezon City.

The Lord has called home
our Beloved Mother, Grandmother

Adelaida Verder Tolentino

(Nov. 14, 1911 - Feb. 20, 2004)
of Batangas City

Please join her children and in-laws, **Mr. Joe & Ethel Trinidad, Dr. Arthur & Lina Tolentino, Mr. Ike & Alice Cruz**; grandchildren, great grandchildren and their families in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Mortuary of Immaculate Concepcion Parish Church, Batangas City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, February 24, 2004 after the 1 p.m. Mass, at Eternal Gardens Alangilan, Batangas City.

Always caring...

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- ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

ERNESTO V. SANTOS

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on February 21, 2004 at the age of 68.

His bereaved wife **Matilde Santos**; children **Ronaldy** and **Erwin**; other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at the Ressurection Chapel, Loreto Parish Church, Sampaloc, Manila.

Interment will be on February 25, 2004 at the La Loma Cemetery, Kalookan City, Metro Manila at 3:00 p.m.

> **"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."**
>
> — 2 Corinthians 5:8

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Tels. (0705) 522-3451, 522-2128 (0917) 434-9076
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Cebu Branch A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad
Mandaue City, Cebu Tels. 346-2543, 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills Lahug, Cebu City Tels. 231-0721, 231-3192
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Tels. 740-2683, 781-3705, 781-3688, 413-9400, 715-5594
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965 Del Monte Ave., Frisco Quezon City Tels. 416-3231; 4162373
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Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila. Tels. 642-6181 to 82
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Tels. 283-1813, 273-8922

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Arellano St., Dagupan City Tels. (075) 515-5860, 522-8783, (0917) 520-5001
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Mandalagan, Bacolod City Tel. 433-7132
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SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City. Tel. Nos. 843-8838-30, Fax No. 843-9223
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.
Telefax 724-4130, 725-2344
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City. Tels. 852-8228, 852-7264
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc Manila. Tels. 740-3670, 781-1772
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296 Quezon Ave. Quezon City Tels. 372-5C04, 410-9286/87
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Tels. (049) 562-1688, 800-2914 Cel No. (0917) 5016903

CLASSIFIEDS

INVITATION FOR BIDS

PNOC-EDC
Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, 1634 Taguig,
Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel.: (632) 893-6001
Fax (632) 840-1575

Date: February 16, 2004
Loan No.: PH-P176
Contract No.: EDC 03-188

1. PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (hereinafter referred to as PNOC-EDC) has received an ODA loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as JBIC) in the amount of 14.46 Billion Yen towards the cost of the Northern Negros Geothermal Project and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of the loan to eligible payments under the contract for the **Detailed Engineering, Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of the Electrical Power Supply System and Associated Electrical Equipment and Materials for the Northern Negros Geothermal Project Fluid Collection and Reinjection System.** Disbursement of an ODA Loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans". No party other than PNOC EDC shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claim to loan proceeds.
2. JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as PNOC-EDC, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC.
   - (a) Will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
   - (b) Will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans if it at any time determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.
3. PNOC-EDC now invites eligible bidders to bid for the supply of the Goods and Personnel for the purpose of the Project.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information on the eligibility requirements and inspect the bidding documents at the Office of the Contracts Administration Group, c/o Raymond Sison PNOC-EDC, Energy Center, Bonifacio Global City Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines, Telephone No. (632) 893-1320/893-6001, Fax No. 840-1481, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., starting February 18, 2004, Monday to Friday.
5. The complete set of bid documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on the submission of written application to the above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000), Philippine Currency or One Hundred Fifty US Dollars (US$150) in case of foreign bidders to defray courier expenses.
6. For purposes of clarifying issues, a pre-bid conference will be held at PNOC-EDC's CAC Conference Rm., Ground Floor, Bldg. V at 2:30 p.m. on March 2, 2004.
7. A two (2) stage bidding procedure shall be employed. For the first stage, bidders shall submit their, sealed Application for Eligibility and the Initial Technical Proposal in three (3) sets to the Contracts Administration Group, PNOC-Energy Development Corporation, not later than 2:00 P.M. on March 9, 2004. Application for Eligibility and the Initial Technical Proposed shall be evaluated and bidder's who are eligible to bid will be notified in writing by PNOC-EDC.
8. For the second stage, eligible bidders shall be required to submit their Final Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal in two separate sealed envelopes. All bids submitted by eligible bidders must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of surety bond certified check, bank draft, standby letter of credit or bank guarantee secured form a bank, local or foreign, acceptable to PNOC-EDC which shall be callable on demand for an account of at least One Million Sixty Thousand Pesos (P1,060,000.00) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. The bid security must be valid for a period of 150 days reckoned from the date of bid opening, and must be delivered to:

   Contract Award Committee
   PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
   Energy Center, Bonifacio Global City
   Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines

   At or before 2:00 P.M. on (to be officially communicated to eligible bidders) Bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. PNOC-EDC reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bids which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders on the ground of PNOC-EDC's action.
10. DELIVERY SCHEDULE - The Goods under this invitation are required, to be delivered within 180 days upon receipt of Letter of Credit. No credit will be given to earlier deliveries and bids offering delivery beyond 180 days will be treated as non-responsive.

    The Goods are considered to be delivered when all the items specified in the Contract have arrived at Manila Port or at any other location or port in the Philippines mutually agreed upon by the Bidder/Supplier and PNOC-EDC. Hence, the 180 day delivery period is inclusive of shipping time.
11. Special care and consideration must be taken by the Bidder to understand fully and to respond correctly to this Invitation for Bids. PNOC-EDC will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--Feb. 23, 2004)

Office of the President
Republic of the Philippines
CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Clark Development Corporation (CDC) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested provider for the hereunder listed project:

"Lease of a Dedicated, Uninterrupted and Unlimited Internet Access and Connection with a Minimum Bandwidth of 1024 Kbps Using Wired Technology"

The project calls for all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with existing facilities and three (3) years experience as an ISP and NTC Registration as Value Added Provider or any equivalent government license for an ISP to provide the lease of a dedicated, uninterruptible, and unlimited Internet access and connection with a minimum bandwidth of 1024 kbps using wired technology. The winning bidder shall deliver and complete connection of said service within fourteen (14) calendar days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed from CDC.

The bidding activity will be governed by Republic Act 9184 and its implementing rules on the eligibility checking and evaluation of bids using the non-discretionary pass/fail criteria.

Issuance of the Bidding Documents will be on **February 24, 2004 to March 8, 2004** at BAC Secretariat, 3rd Floor, Bldg. 2127 upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Php 5,000.00**.

The approved budget of the contract is One Million Nine Hundred Thirty One Thousand Four Hundred Pesos (**P 1,931,400.00**).

Site Inspection and Pre-bid conference will be on **March 11, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.** respectively.

CDC reserves the right to reject any or all applications on all bids without offering any reason, waive any formality, informality and/or defect and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government, nor does CDC guarantee that an award will be made.

Submission and opening of bids shall be on **March 23, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.** at the OTS Conference Room, Bldg. 2125, CDC Corporate Offices, E. Quirino St., Clark Field, Pampanga.

The award of the contract shall be after the election ban (March 26, 2004 to May 9, 2004) pursuant to Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code (Batas Pambansa Blg. 881).

A copy of this invitation maybe viewed at www.clark.com.ph and the E-GPS.

All inquiries and letters shall be addressed to:

The BAC Secretariat
Clark Development Corporation
3rd Floor, Bldg. 2127, E. Quirino Avenue,
CSEZ, Clark Field, Pampanga
bacsecretariat@clark.com.ph
Telefax: (45) 599-9000 local 542

(Sgd.) **ROMEO N. DYOCO, JR.**
Chairman
Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - Feb 23, March 1, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD GOVERNMENT
Region 8, Tacloban

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), Region 8, invites interested parties to participate in the sealed bidding for the lease of the ground floor of the People's Center and Library located at Real St., Tacloban City as venue for "SUMMER BAZAAR" trade exhibit from May 01, 2004 to July 01, 2004.

The bidding guidelines will be available at PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA Mandaluyong City and at the PCGG Regional Office, Nipa Hut, Jones St., Tacloban City, starting February 23, 2004. For inquiries, please contact Mr. Alfredo dela Paz at Telephone Nos. 726-0034 and 725-6958 and Mr. Renor O. Dauag at Telephone No. (053) 321-3413.

Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before March 15, 2004, while bids will be received, opened and tabulated at 10:00 A.M. on March 22, 2004 in the presence of the bidders at the PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

(Sgd.) **RENOR O. DAUAG**
Officer-in-Charge
PCGG, Region 8
Tacloban City

(PDI – Feb. 22, 23 & 24, 2004)

DON MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL STATE UNIVERSITY
LA UNION, PHILIPPINES
Tel. & Fax No. (63) (72) 888-53-54

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND SUBMIT PROJECT PROPOSAL

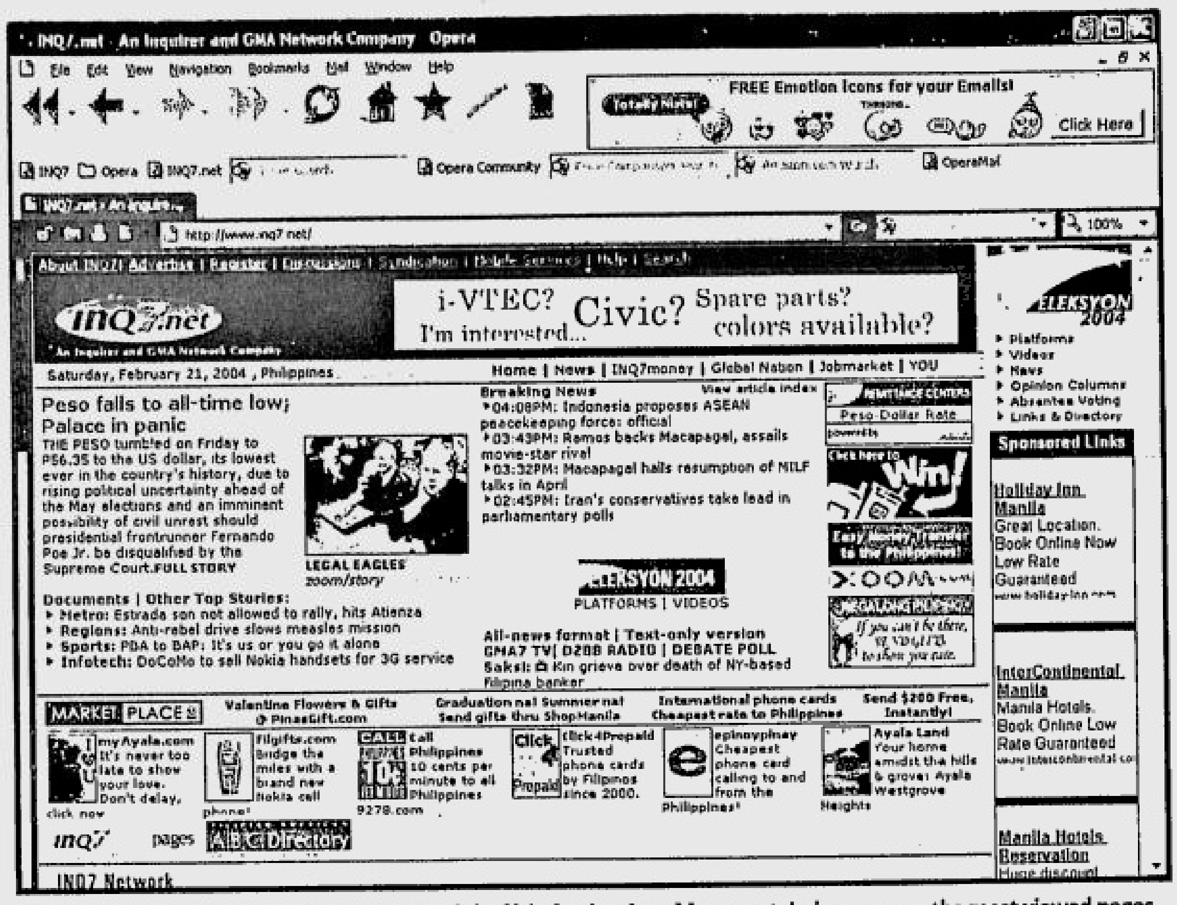
The Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) hereby invites interested contractors/project proponents (local or foreign firms) to pre-qualify and submit comparative/competitive project proposals to the Unsolicited Proposal received from a reliable firm for the Build and Transfer (BT) **Construction of the DMMMSU Integrated Educational Business Administrative Center (DEBAC) Project** located at San Fernando City, La Union on a 15-Year Payment Plan at 12% annual interest and pursuant to R.A. 6957 as amended by R.A. 7718 and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

Interested contractors/project proponents are required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) addressed to the Chairman, University Bids and Awards Committee (UBAC) at DMMMSU, 3rd Floor JICA Building, Sapilang, Bacnotan, La Union on or before **March 01, 2004 until 12 noon** ("Submission Deadline"). Pre-qualification documents and forms are available for issuance to interested potential contractors/project proponents starting February 09, 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Thousand (P500,000.00) Pesos (only in Philippine Currency and presentation of documents) showing adequate capability to sustain the financing requirements of the construction of the project.

DMMMSU reserves the right to reject any or all applications for pre-qualification, to waive any defect or infirmity therein, to accept a project proposal and to award the contract to the most advantageous proposal.

(Sgd.) **DR. ELVI C. BUGAOAN**
Chairman, UBAC

(PDI–February 13, 16 & 23, 2004)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Saturday, February 21, 2004 , Philippines

Peso falls to all-time low; Palace in panic

THE PESO tumbled on Friday to P56.35 to the US dollar, its lowest ever in the country's history, due to rising political uncertainty ahead of the May elections and an imminent possibility of civil unrest should presidential frontrunner Fernando Poe Jr. be disqualified by the Supreme Court.FULL STORY

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Breaking News
- 04:08PM: Indonesia proposes ASEAN peacekeeping force: official
- 03:43PM: Ramos backs Macapagal, assails movie-star rival
- 03:32PM: Macapagal hails resumption of MILF talks in April
- 02:45PM: Iran's conservatives take lead in parliamentary polls

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Saksi: Kin grieve over death of NY-based Filipina banker

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STORIES on the Abu Sayyaf, Ping Lacson and the Kris Aquino-Joey Marquez teledrama were the most viewed pages of INQ7.net last year. After three years, INQ7.net remains the country's most visited website.

Politics, show-biz news push INQ7.net . . .

From page B16

pines to conduct fresh military exercises in Jolo, Sulu. However, this might have just added some spice to the Abu Sayyaf-related stories.

What really got the attention of everyone, including the rest of the world, was the outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Considered the biggest health story of 2003, the SARS, which started in China, crippled the travel industry of Asian nations. As a result of the SARS outbreak, Asian economies suffered as businesses slowed down due to fear and paranoia. Reports of Filipinos suspected of having SARS prompted the country to put up health checkpoints in major entry points. But news of one Filipino overseas workers diagnosed of SARS escaping the health checkpoints added more panic to the paranoia.

Also in April, a bomb went off in Davao City. The bomb blast killed over a dozen people at a Davao wharf, prompting President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to launch a campaign against the terrorists believed to be linked with various Muslim extremist groups.

Another interesting story in April 2003 involved the Supreme Court's revival of the murder raps against Sen. Panfilo Lacson. Lacson was implicated in the alleged summary killing of the Kuratong Baleleng gang.

As months passed, it seemed that people grew tired of hearing about the viral outbreak, the Lacson case, and terrorism in the southern areas of the Philippines. This was also reflected in the drop of page views between the months of May, June and July 2003.

Toward the end of July 2003, the average page views for the month of July reached 25.9 million. But from the months of July to August 2003, the website's monthly average page views were relatively flat, until Sept. 25 when Filipino show-biz personality Kris Aquino dropped a bombshell on lover and Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez.

Similar to the recorded page views during the SARS outbreak, INQ7.net once again saw a dramatic increase in the number of people accessing the website.

While INQ7.net was reporting about the Jose Pidal exposé involving First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, most overseas Filipinos were glued to their computers. This was elevated further when Kris, daughter of former president Cory Aquino, tightened the screws a notch further on Marquez.

The story, which sounded like one taken out of a telenovela, revealed a stormy relationship between Aquino and Marquez, which ended as she disclosed that her lover cocked a gun and pointed it at her. She even added that Marquez gave her a sexually transmitted disease. Marquez denied all these accusations. Not surprisingly, the quarrel ended in a few days, and the telenovela came to a conclusion with Aquino and Marquez back together in each others' arms.

Toward the end of 2003, INQ7.net page views dipped to 23 million but immediately spiked to 30 million with the start of the presidential campaign period.

All in all, the average page views of INQ7.net have steadily climbed from 2001 to 2004.

In 2001, INQ7.net page views averaged about 13.3 million a month. This climbed to 16.7 million a month in 2002. By 2003, the site's page views jumped to 26.8 million. At the start of 2004, the site's page views have already hit 30.5 million.

This was also the same case for the website's unique visitors. From 2001 to 2004, the average number of unique visitors doubled to 1.1 million in 2004 from 572,926 in 2001.

If these numbers are to be interpreted, INQ7.net has somehow captured a snapshot of the reading habits of people visiting the website. And, after three years, INQ7.net—which is celebrating its third anniversary on Feb. 27—remains the country's most visited website.

Microsoft warns people against sharing source code leaked on Internet

Windows NT, 2000 secrets out online

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

MICROSOFT Corp. has warned the public against sharing the company's crown jewels—the source code to its Windows operating system—after an embarrassing leak which led to the release of the source code out on the Internet.

The incident, which happened on Valentine's Day, involved the illegal leakage of portions of the Windows 2000 and Windows NT 4.0 source code on the Internet.

Microsoft admitted that the source code was posted online illegally, and was not a result of any breach of its corporate network or internal security, the company said in a statement issued to local media.

Thus, it has warned people from distributing or reposting the source code since it is both copyrighted information and a "protected trade secret."

"As such, it is illegal to post it, make it available to others, download it or use it. Microsoft will take all appropriate legal actions to protect its intellectual property. Questions about the investigation should be referred to the FBI," it added.

Microsoft said it is now working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies to catch the people or group behind this leakage.

Company officials refused to comment on the matter, insisting that they are still waiting for official findings.

"All we can say is that it is still under investigation by the FBI and we're waiting for their official say on the matter," said Sanjay Mirchandani, president of Microsoft Asia Pacific Region, in an interview with Infotech.

About 200 megabytes of files leaked online contained compressed copies of the Windows 2000 and Windows NT 4.0 source code. Microsoft hopes to prevent hackers from exploring vulnerabilities in the source code, as it actively sends letters to people warning them of analyzing the source code for vulnerabilities.

"It is not also related to our shared source initiative or the government security program, which enables our customers and partners, as well as governments, to legally access Microsoft source code," Microsoft continued in the statement.

A source code is part of a computer program that reveals how an operating system runs. Windows uses a proprietary source code, which means only a few people have access to it. On the other hand, Linux has an open source code, which allows people to manipulate the software.

However, a local Microsoft certified professional and owner of a local Internet service provider was more afraid of the security implications of the incident.

Now that portions of the source code have been leaked out, he is concerned that some hackers might find ways to tweak the source codes and find exploits and security weaknesses, said Wilson Chua of Dagupan-based ISP Bitstop Inc.

"Thankfully the market is moving out of Windows NT 4.0 to Windows 2003. So concerns about security problems for some would be moot and academic. In our case, we already migrated our system to Windows 2003 four days ago after we heard that the source code was leaked," Chua added.

Local information security expert Albert dela Cruz also agreed that this situation puts Microsoft at a compromising position since crackers and virus writers would have easier means of exploring vulnerabilities in the Windows source code.

"It has already cut down the time for them to find new exploits to the source code since they already have access to some portions of it," he added. "What if they find them? Microsoft is now at the mercy of these hackers/crackers."

Indeed, Microsoft has begun investigating a reported exploit on versions of Internet Explorer allegedly discovered by an individual studying the leaked source code.

Microsoft, however, said that the new exploit was a "known issue" that the company had discovered and addressed with a new software patch.

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by Kenneth Palacios Country Manager 3Com Philippines	by Gilbert Virtucio Senior Network Consultant 3Com Philippines	by Dieter Brueckner President DB Consulting

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1pm – 1:30pm	Mobile Computing Technology Keynote by Daren Ng
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Deploying Mobile Computing Solutions in the Enterprise by Deiter Brueckner
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Scaling Up to a Secure Network Infrastructure by Gilbert Virtucio
3:30pm – 4:30pm	Gearing Up to a VOIP-enabled Network by Kenneth Palacios
4:30pm – 5:00pm	Networking Technology Keynote by Stanimira Koleva

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Editor **Leo Magno**

Politics, show-biz news push INQ7.net to 30M page views

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE PRESIDENTIAL campaign and news about show-biz personalities continue to attract the interest of online readers both here and abroad, as shown by the latest statistics from INQ7.net, the joint multimedia news website of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network.

If we would base this interest on the number of people—a sizeable amount of them Filipinos working abroad—accessing INQ7.net, one would see a jump in the number of page views recorded during the month of January 2004 compared to December 2003.

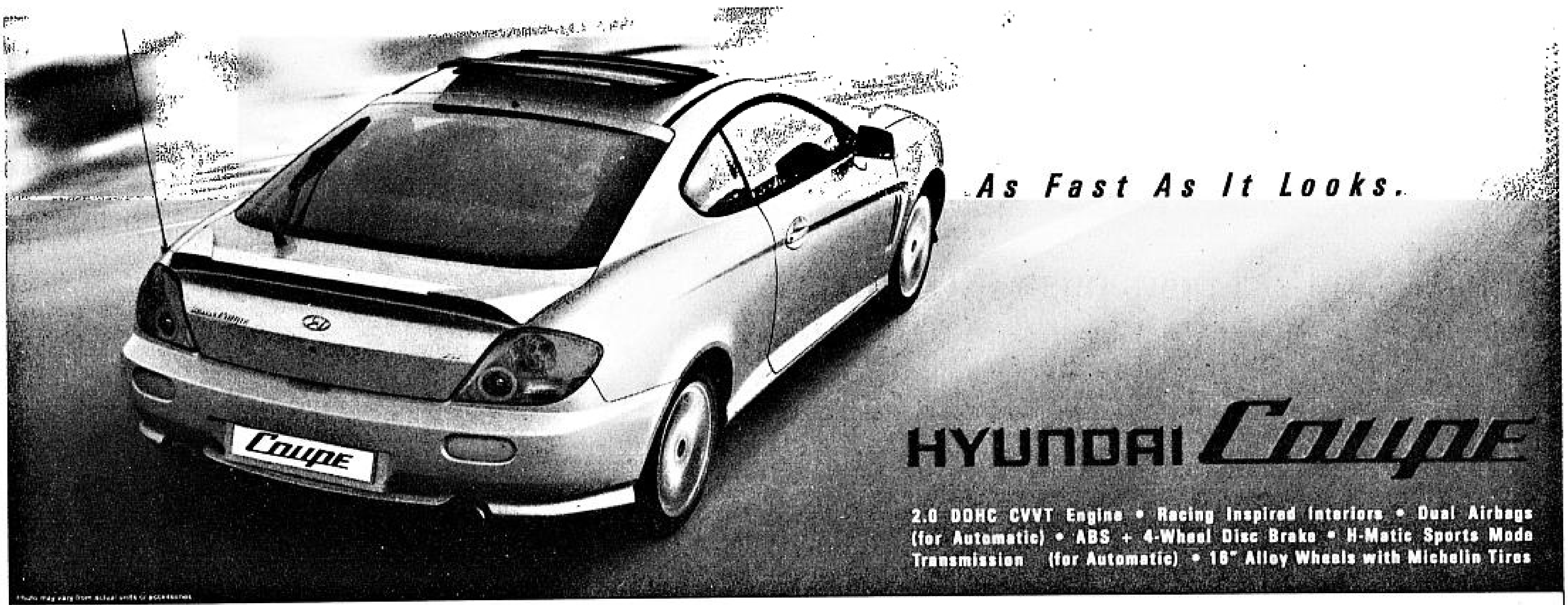
Based on INQ7.net figures, the website's average monthly page views have climbed to 30.5 million from 23.4 million in December 2003. To non-geeks, page view counts refer to the number of times a webpage is accessed during a certain time period. One webpage viewed online is one page view, but one webpage can contain several "hits." Hits refer to the number of webpage elements (text, links, JPEG images, etc.) contained in a single page. Thus, a page view count is always smaller than a hit count, but is a more reliable metric than counting the number of hits a website gets.

In terms of readership, INQ7.net has also seen an explosive climb in the number of unique visitors between December 2003 and January 2004. Figures showed that the site had 1.1 million unique visitors as of January 2004, compared to 739,785 during December 2003.

Interestingly, a closer look at the number of page views for the whole of 2003 reveals some trends about what Philippine news have attracted readers in the past year.

Between March 2003 and April 2003, INQ7.net saw a steep climb in page views to 33.5 million toward April from 26.4 million in March. Looking back, this period was mainly dominated by news of the infamous kidnap-for-ransom group Abu Sayyaf, which continue to elude military forces. There was also news of American troops coming over to the Philip-

POLITICS/ B15



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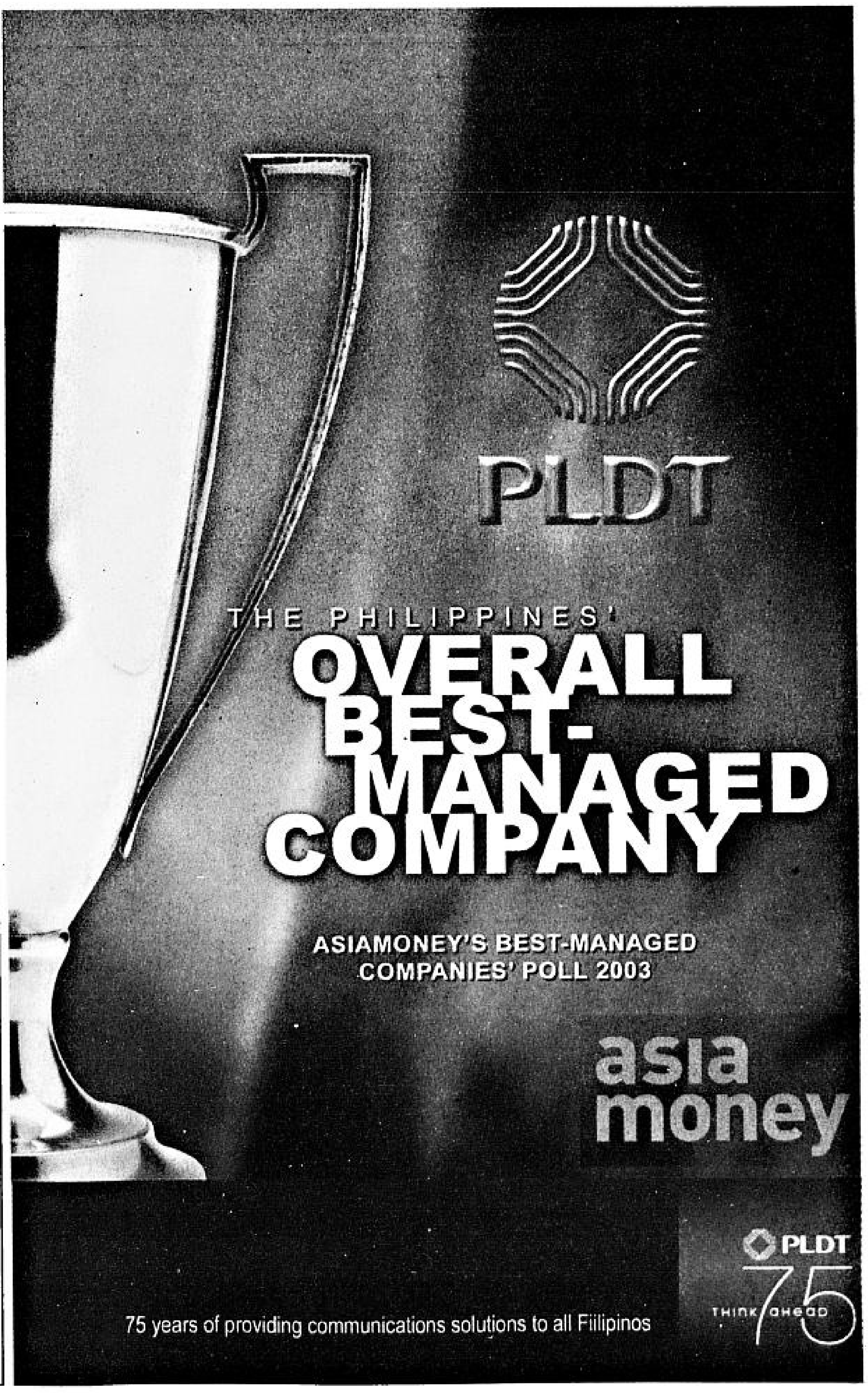
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2003
(with comparative numbers for 2002)

Figures in Million Pesos
(except per share, margin, and ratio data)

	2003	2002	% Change
Net Revenues	97,723	80,170	22%
Net Income			
Recurring (Before exceptional charges)	16,876	7,113	137%
Reported (After exceptional charges)	11,182	3,003	272%
Earnings Per Share	55.74	8.03	594%
EBITDA			
Amount	57,320	45,287	27%
Margin	59%	56%	-
Free Cash Flow	22,606	18,269	24%
Debt Reduction (In million US$)	252	209	21%
Net Debt / Equity	1.49	1.79	
Net Debt / EBITDA	2.45	3.48	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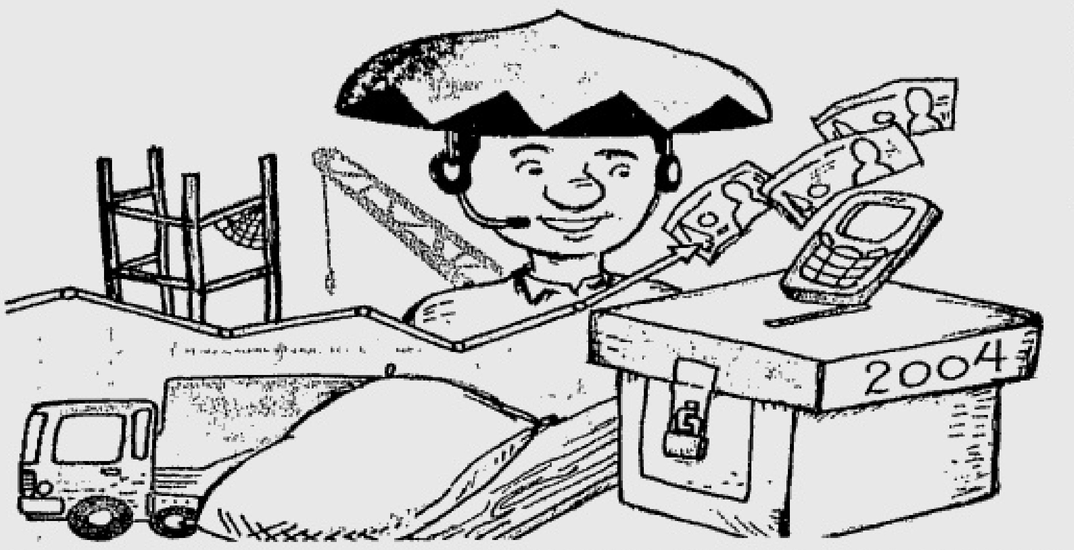
How will the economy fare in this election year

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor



THE ECONOMY grew respectably last year, despite SARS and the war against Iraq. Prospects are healthy for 2004, though some inflation is expected.

These were some of the findings presented in Eagle Watch, the briefing at the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development (ACERD).

ACERD's Dr. Cielito Habito, former chief of the National Economic Development Authority, reviewed the economy in 2003 and presented the outlook for 2004.

Gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 4.5 percent in 2003, or within the target band of 4.2 to 5.2 percent. Gross national product (GNP) or GDP plus income from abroad, hit 5.5 percent growth. That was higher than the upper end of the target of 4.5 to 5.4 percent.

The sector that contributed the most growth was services, at 5.9 percent. Industry was below target, at 3.0 percent, while agriculture rose by 3.9 percent. Industry was pushed up by manufacturing (4.2 percent) but pulled down by construction (-5.9 percent).

Consumption

In 2003 personal consumption posted the highest growth rate since 1990: 5.1 percent. Dragging the economy was government consumption, which contracted by 2.8 percent because of fiscal woes.

Investment growth was 4.8 percent, pulled up by private construction (7.4 percent) and spending on durable equipment (9.3 percent). But it was weighed down by public sector construction (-17.9 percent).

Exports rose by 3.3 percent. Imports also increased by 10.3 percent, indicating a pickup in the economy. Note that the bulk of imports were not consumer goods—they were capital goods and inputs to production.

Prices were generally stable in 2003. While the target was 4.5 to 5 percent inflation, the actual rate was lower at 3.1 percent.

Not much inflation

However, inflation began to rise, as seen in the 3.4 percent rate for January 2004.

Jobs were created, but much joblessness was still prevalent. According to the latest reading on October 2003, the unemployment rate was still high, at 10.1 percent. Underemployment, or working but wanting more work, was 15.7 percent in the same period.

What industries gained the most? Posting double-digit growth were the categories: Basic metals, Wood and cork products, Non-electrical machinery, Textiles, Furniture and fixtures.

The services sector was outstanding also due to its size and stability. It accounted for almost half of gross domestic product. And over the years it remained steady in strong growth. This was in contrast with industry which had been erratic, and with agriculture, which was most volatile.

Leading the services sector was the category of Transport, Communication and Storage, which grew by 13.4 percent in 2003. In particular, telecommunications, especially text messaging, were powering the boom.

Eagle's eye view of 2004

What about the economy in 2004? The government forecast for GDP is 4.9 to 5.8 percent growth, while that for GNP is 5.2 to 6.0 percent. The state also believes that inflation will hover between 4 to 5 percent.

The benchmark indicator for interest rates is that of the 91-day Treasury bills, which stood at 6.0 percent last year. The government forecasts a rate of 7.5 to 8.5 percent for 2004. The national government deficit as a percent of GDP should also decline, from 4.7 percent in 2003 to 4.2 percent this year.

Habito presents other numbers, citing the projections from the fine-tuned Ateneo Macroeconomic Forecasting Model (AMFM). The Ateneo model predicts GDP growth of 4.6 to 5.0 percent, and GNP growth of 5.6 to 6.0 percent.

Interest rates for the 91-day Treasury bills will range from 7.0 to 8 percent.

Prices to rise somewhat

The Ateneo model finds that the inflation rate in 2004 should lie within the band of 4.5 to 5 percent. Fueling inflation, besides election spending, are: the depreciation of the peso, a rise in import tariffs, higher oil prices, and a crackdown on smuggling. The professor wonders if the workers will be demanding more wage hikes.

What will drive growth this year? An obvious factor is election spending. Consumer confidence is also rising, as are corporate earnings. Government expenditures are under control, while tax and customs revenues are improving.

External factors

Some overseas developments can boost Philippine growth. The United States is displaying a solid recovery, and its growth should post 4.7 percent this year. America is also holding back any interest rate increase.

The recession is ending in Europe. Asia's economy is brisk, with Japan waking up, China running at 7 percent growth, and Thailand sizzling at 8 percent. Reviving foreign markets will lift Philippine exports, especially electronics.

Finally, on the down side, the public deficit will continue to cramp government spending. It also leads to the swelling of the debt burden.

Debt service accounts for more than 30 percent of the government budget. The Philippines must also contend with her credit downgrade, higher oil prices, and the threat of the Avian Flu.

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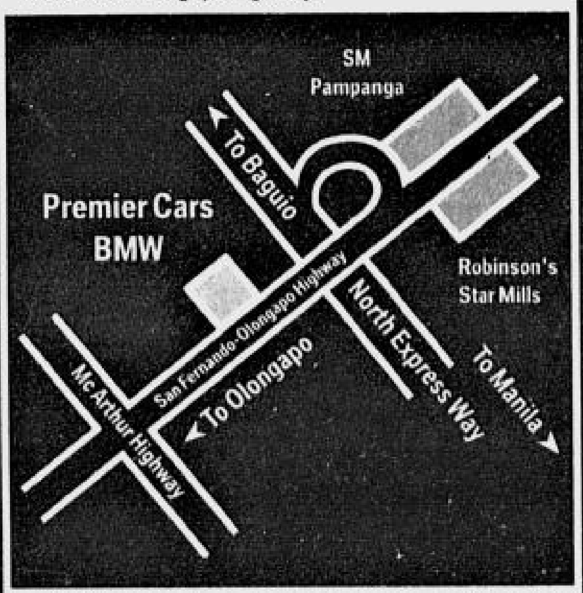

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CHRISTIAN Rola, Lawrence Cantos, Nelson Dinio and Christopher Ferareza.

Local firm brings Filipino expertise across the globe

THE OVERSEAS Filipino Worker (OFW) normally brings to mind the thousands of Filipinas—mothers, sisters and wives—who have left their homes to be helpers in other people's homes abroad. On the other hand it reminds us of fathers, brothers and husbands who weather the lonely deserts of the Middle East as laborers.

Although the majority of OFWs fall under these categories, a growing number of homegrown talent working overseas is finding its niche in knowledge-based industries, and making quite a different mark for Filipinos around the world.

Christian Rola is an OFW currently based in New York. Over the Thanksgiving holiday, he settled into his new apartment in the upper east side of Manhattan. From there, he walks every morning to the midtown office of Grant Thornton, where he takes on the responsibility of an assurance manager.

Rola is just one of six executives from public accounting firm Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A) who have been assigned to different Grant Thornton International offices overseas.

Secondment program

Early in 2003, P&A became a member of Grant Thornton, one of the world's leading organizations of accounting and consulting firms and last year's recipient of the "Large Firm of the Year" award in the UK-based Accountancy Age Awards. As part of the membership, P&A and Grant Thornton developed a secondment program, which allows the local firm to send some of its best professionals abroad to provide temporary, full-time services, and undergo training with their Grant Thornton peers.

Rola, an audit manager at P&A and a University of the East alumnus, is joined in the US by Christopher Ferareza and Nelson Dinio, who are based in the Grant Thornton offices in Chicago and Los Angeles respectively. Both are also audit managers at P&A.

A few weeks before flying to California, Dinio said, "I'm looking forward to applying everything I've learned at P&A to my LA assignment, and at the same time learning about the accounting standards and methods they have over there." Dinio is a magna cum laude graduate from the Holy Angel University who obtained the third highest rating

LOCAL/ B2-3

National recovery: What CPAs can offer

MAPping THE FUTURE

By Antonio T. Hernandez

IT IS disheartening to hear that in our present-day worklife, in the hard realities of contemporary materialism, the benefits and advancement ironically tend to favor merely the shrewd rather than the principled, the popular rather than the prudent, the cute who prides in skirting the rules... as if the rules are made not to be followed but to train people to manipulate and circumvent its provisions. You are slow and shallow if you cannot evade the rules and the strictures, and the taxes. This is exactly how our graduates, our young romantics, get the shock of their lives when they enter the rough-and-tumble business of living...where to be law-abiding is construed to be dumb!

The need to revisit professional standards, to call to mind and relive business ethics; the need to be more vigilant in monitoring the use and misuse of resources; to be circumspect and objective in the opinion we render (be it in government or in private engagements) should be a continuing conscious effort if we are to help forestall the incidence of misfeasance.

Towards good governance

The current inclination of business and even social organizations towards good governance (towards monitoring and preventing the wastage of resources, the massaging of accounting data, and the misuse of information) is one strong positive sign of reawakening. It is an encouraging development, albeit sensitive as it is challenging, particularly for people in a position to evaluate, to situate, and to forecast the financial health of businesses and the economy—e.g., the finance people, the budget and audit professionals. MAP's "Philippine Movement for Good Governance" is a fine example along this line.

Nonetheless, while there may be enough policy measures and institutions already in place to curb sorry practices, the lapse comes largely in the area of implementation. There is, for one, the aspect of protecting the whistleblowers; the other is enforcing the sanctions on offenders. This lapse could very well lessen the effectiveness of reforms.

Not enough to be legal

It will certainly take more than just a watchful eye or a sophisticated control system to uphold good governance and win the fight against graft.

In our profession, it is not enough to be legal . . . we need to go a step higher i.e., to the level of the ethical and moral. Now, is there at all a difference between ethics and morality? Let me quote to you a situation I read from a clipping: "If a lady comes into one's shop and gives the shopkeeper a P500 bill and he discovers that in fact there are two P500 bills, the question of ETHICS arises when the shopkeeper debates with himself whether or not to disclose the fact to his partner. But when the shopkeeper debates with himself whether or not to return to the lady the other P500 bill, the question of MORALITY arises." The underpinning of his personal internal debate is but the tug-of-war between his conscience and the gravitational pull of greed. And to lose to ones conscience may yet be the way to win. Otherwise, greed gets the upper hand, and it is this desire to acquire beyond reason which leads to corruption. As a sage has spoken, the "world has enough to satisfy man's needs, but it does not have enough to satisfy man's greed!" Does it still surprise you why we have such an unreconciled problem of poverty and surplus?..... why such an incidence of scams hugging the headlines one after another?

Set the example

I would like to believe that, in the pursuit of good governance, what would count the most is, the courage and the will to come forward; to stand by our convention and set the example; to uphold the moorings of our profession as we knew it in our campus days; to resist the lure of crass opportunism that only leads to breaking time-honored values.

Our resolve to uphold the respect for facts, the reverence for character, the love for fair play and honorable achievement are the few that this generation of accountants need to offer to contribute to a better image for the generation of Filipinos coming after us.

We could have been one tiger economy long time ago had we made responsible use of our resource; had the war against corruption been waged relentlessly and sincerely; had the welfare of the people been uppermost and above self.

Beyond bookkeeping

As financial and business advisors, our responsibilities have gone beyond the walls of bookkeeping. In this modern times, when accountants have found their way to management and to corporate boardrooms, they have become strategists as well, not just for financial gains, but also for human development.

Do you think that the business of accountancy is still confined to books of accounts, to financial statements and profits per se? I'd like to think that it goes beyond that. Its business essence is to grow professionally strong and help build enterprises oriented to the development of man. This is how the CPA can matter most as a "partner in progress." For progress must translate into the well-being of man, into his and his society's full development.

Progress which does not edify the human being is void of meaning. Growth which does not benefit the majority is empty. Partnership which only widens the gap between the haves and the have nots is not for the CPA. It does not balance the T-account vis-à-vis the demands of equity and good citizenship. That is why your PICPA national board has seen it fit to have a special committee on cooperatives which addresses the human person under the universal tenet of equity and freedom . . . . a rich field for CPAs to share their talent and discipline.

Staying on track

Not a few says that our society suffers a damaged culture. Indeed, by the looks of it, it seems we have lost those sterling qualities which produced Filipino heroes at the turn of the 19th century. Mending the bureaucracy, reviving those golden values of civic-mindedness, of love for honest labor, of self-discipline, of moral hardiness are imperatives of the highest order. Perhaps, we can help in our own little way, by staying on tracks; keeping faith with the rules of the profession; punctuating multi-media with those motivational reminders . . . like the adage: "be honest even if others are not, even if others cannot, and even if others will not". Sounds old-fashioned! But it is this value, though a rarity nowadays, which is one essential antidote to the ills we see.

Thus, the theme "PICPA: Partner for Progress," speaks well of the organization's support to the national thrust to stamp out corruption; to the effort of strengthening the control systems of the bureaucracy; to the drive towards an enterprising and respectable society. But more than that, is the strengthening of the resolve and the conviction of the men and women tasked of running the standards—the CPAs specially.

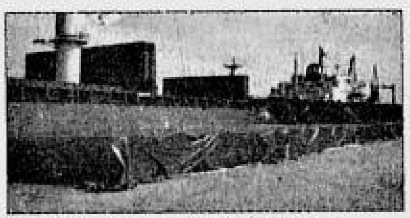
Regain paradise lost

The Filipinos are a creative people, entrepreneurial and productive. Our overseas workers have proven this beyond doubt. The challenge in the home front is how to employ and police our

NATIONAL/ B2-3

More companies are now turning to Harbour Centre for more savings and faster turnaround

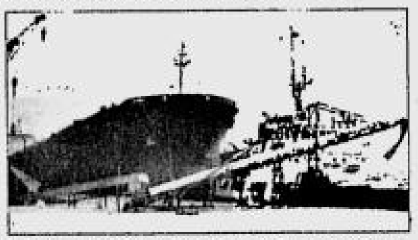
Cold rolled coils and steel plates for various consignees



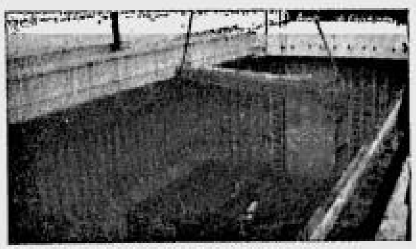
Cold rolled coils for Union Galvasteel and Chuayuco Steel

Falcatta logs for Republic Wooden Commodities

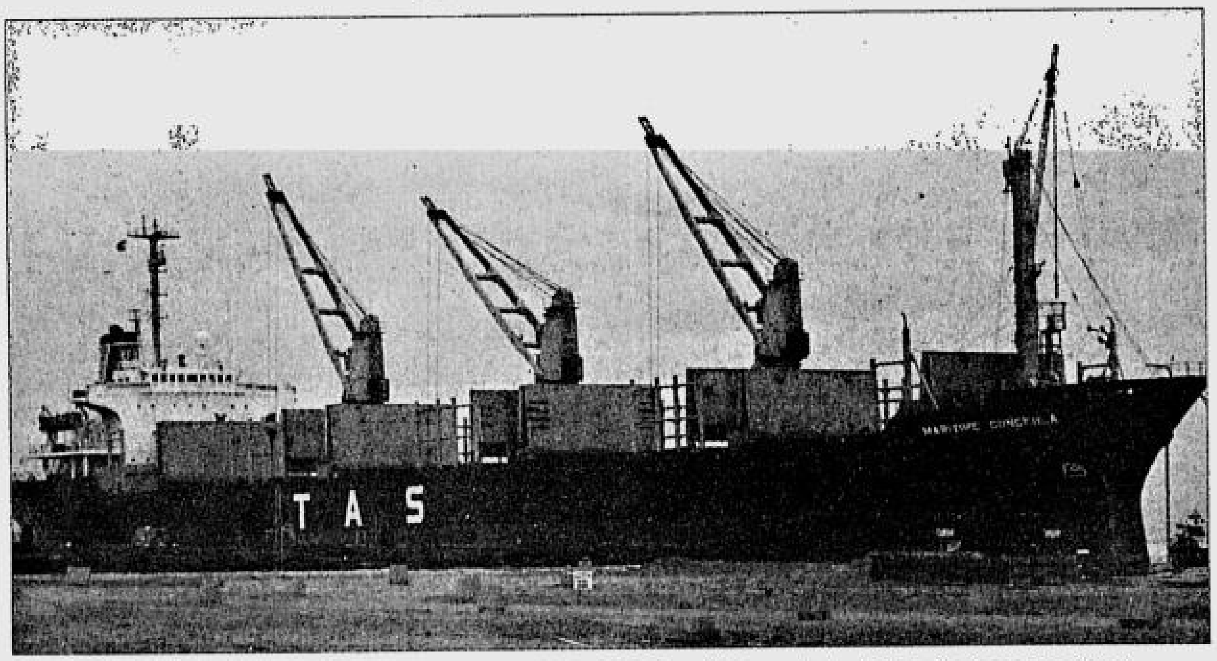
Cold rolled coils for Tower Steel



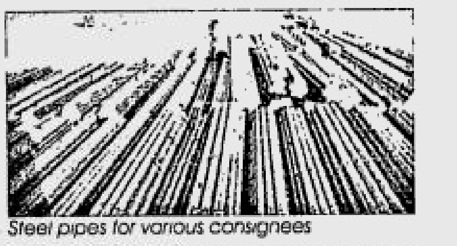
US Hipro soya beans for Phil. Foremost Milling Corp.



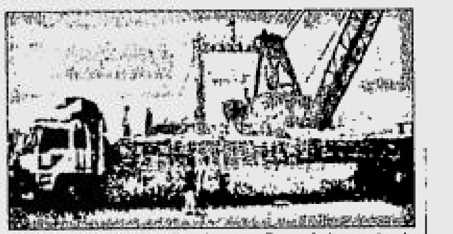
Steel billets for Pag-Asa Steelworks



First pierside operations of this magnitude since 1996: 23,000 metric tons of steel billets for Venus Steel Corp., Samico Steel Mill Corp., Amiko Enterprise and Trade Manila, Inc.

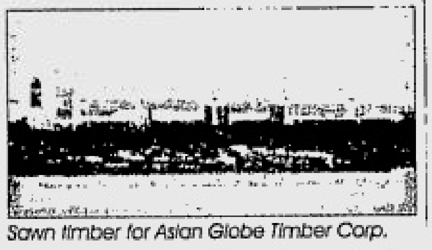


Steel pipes for various consignees



Swine base feeds for Avega Bros. Integrated Shipping Corp.

Pig-iron shipment for Cathay Pacific Steel Corp.



Sawn timber for Asian Globe Timber Corp.

A growing number of companies from various industries are now turning to Harbour Centre as the port terminal of choice both for their international and domestic shipments.

From steel, logs/lumber, and grains industries to livestock, cement, cars/automobile industries, more and more companies are using Harbour Centre's state-of-the-art port amenities to ensure fast and efficient handling of their shipment.

The most modern and most efficient port terminal in the country, Harbour Centre boasts of superior facilities design, modern equipment, spacious terminal yard and deep berthing drafts of -10 and -11.5 MLLW that reduce turnaround by as much as 50%.

The port's working apron can accommodate up to 12 vessels at any given time, while its expansive port terminal can handle up to 3 million tons of breakbulk cargoes and up to 400,000 TEU's of domestic containers.

Harbour Centre also boasts of a 15-hectare back up-area where cargoes up to 6 TEUs high can be properly stacked, ensuring against misplaced or lost cargoes. Complementing its superior facilities are ample port equipment, including 10-15 ton forklifts, 80-ton heavy-lift capacity Gottwald Harbour Mobile Crane.

No wonder, more companies belonging to a wide range of industries -- from Breakbulk to Bulk cargoes, Livestock, Containerized and RORO shipments -- are now enjoying bigger savings, faster turnaround and guaranteed zero pilferage with Harbour Centre Port.

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- Guaranteed no corruption

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- North Port: 865 lineal meters of berthing capacity which can hold up to 8 vessels at a time
- South Port: 250 lineal meters of berthing capacity which can hold up to 4 vessels at a time
- Berthing Walls are supported by 27-meter long steel sheet piles from Luxembourg, while reclamation works were done by Jan de Nul of Belgium using the most advanced technologies in reclamation and dredging.
- Berthing Drafts: from -10 m.l.l.w to -11.5 m.l.lw
- Working Apron: 1) North Port 30 meters wide by 865 lineal meter long and 2) South Port 20 meters wide by 250 lineal meters long
- Back-up Area: 15 hectares with a stacking capacity of up to 6 TEU's high and can withstand up to 9,000 PSI in strength
- The only seaport with 3 superhighway channels of -10 meters to -11.5 meters in depth and 7 to 14 kilometers in length.

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National recovery . . .

From page B2-2

training and creativity that they do not find their way to misdeeds; how to direct our enterprise and our productivity so that the benefits redound not anymore to just the privileged few, but to the economic well-being of the toiling majority who constitute the backbone of our society—a society of God's own creation—for whom the Holy Child on Christmas day took human form and bestowed hope.... the hope to regain paradise lost. This is where the CPA and his values should count and impact on the body politic!

System of integrity

Indeed, it is for us to continue finding ways of improving the accounting practice within the context of business ethics and of its own as a profession. We owe it to ourselves and to our country that we help in the effort of nation building by manning well the safeguards to good governance; by lighting our respective candles to shine in our little corners and collectively illuminate the pathways towards a "system of national integrity".

While we have rarely been lucky with our leaders, we should not be dismayed, for in the end, "with all the sham, the drudgery and the broken dreams, this is still a beautiful world" so thus Desiderata concludes.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is SVP of Land Bank of the Philippines. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

Goodness Graces

From page B2-4

essary to address topics not on the agenda.

- Don't text while at meetings.
- Don't end the meeting without an action plan or assignments for next steps.

Please email your business etiquette queries to etiquetteconsultants@hotmail.com names of senders will not be published.

Local firm brings . . .

From page B2-2

in the October 1998 CPA board exams.

This is not the first time P&A is sending its own to overseas accounting offices for the invaluable experience and training. This is, however, the first batch of "ambassadors of excellence" that the Firm is fielding under P&A Grant Thornton. "This is proof," Rola points out, "that Grant Thornton recognizes the Firm's capability to develop competent accounting professionals."

P&A's talent pool is indeed being tapped not just for the secondment program, but also for the development of other Grant Thornton International members in the Asia Pacific region.

Turning the tables

Olga Ann Barrera, a senior manager in P&A's tax division, spent her Christmas settling into her new—albeit temporary—home in Thailand and her role as a tax director at Grant Thornton's Bangkok office. Her overseas assignment is set for three years.

Barrera, who has been in public accounting since 1992, joined the Thailand office to share with the local staff her wealth of experience and expertise as a tax lawyer.

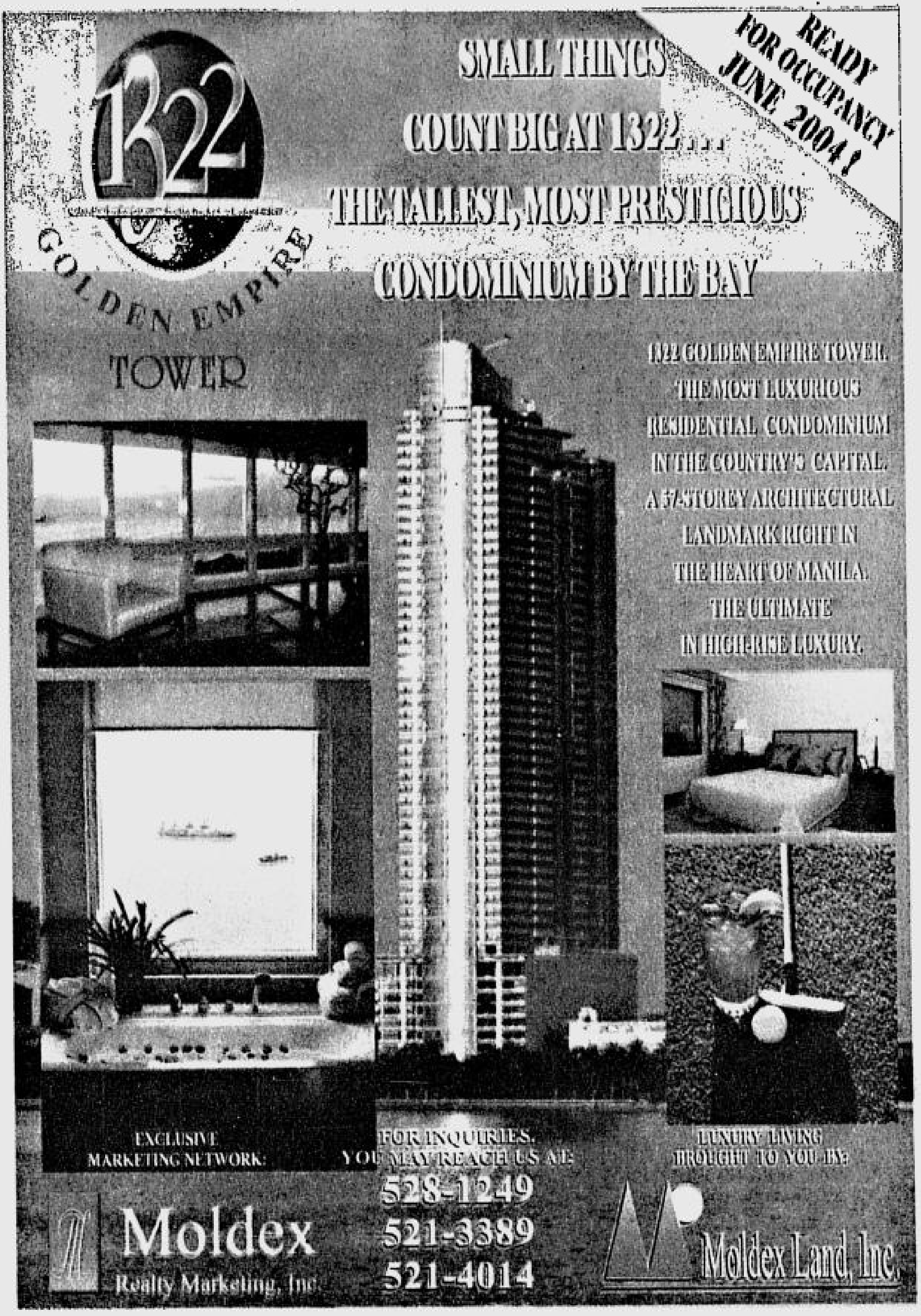
She got her accounting degree, magna cum laude, from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, and, as a P&A scholar, went on to obtain her law degree from the Ateneo de Manila University.

Barrera explains, "It's a big responsibility for all of us, especially since we'll be representing our Firm (P&A) to the rest of the world. We are expected to embody the P&A ideals of integrity, competence, and excellence of service, no matter where we are and in whatever we do."

She is not the only senior P&A professional assigned to a Grant Thornton office in Asia. Since last August, Ronald Almera, a senior manager in P&A's audit division, has been working as an audit manager at the Grant Thornton office in Vietnam. In 1988, he graduated with honorable mention from De La Salle University and finished with the 16th highest rating in the CPA board exams.

Early this year, the youngest member of this first batch of "P&A ambassadors of excellence" will also start his assignment abroad. A cum laude graduate from UP-Diliman and a technology risk management senior from P&A, Lawrence Cantos will fly south to share his knowledge in auditing and information technology with Grant Thornton staff in Christchurch, New Zealand.

As one of the more well-established members of Grant Thornton International in the Asia Pacific region, P&A sees in the secondment program a window of opportunity to export its talented professionals and contribute to the continuing growth of its neighboring members. "It's funny," observes Dinio, "because Filipinos usually look to foreigners as the best resource persons to educate them. But in P&A, we have somehow turned the tables."



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35%	348,250	56,046	38,471	29,990	21,560	17,398	15,341
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How to make meetings more effective and productive?

GOODNESS GRACES

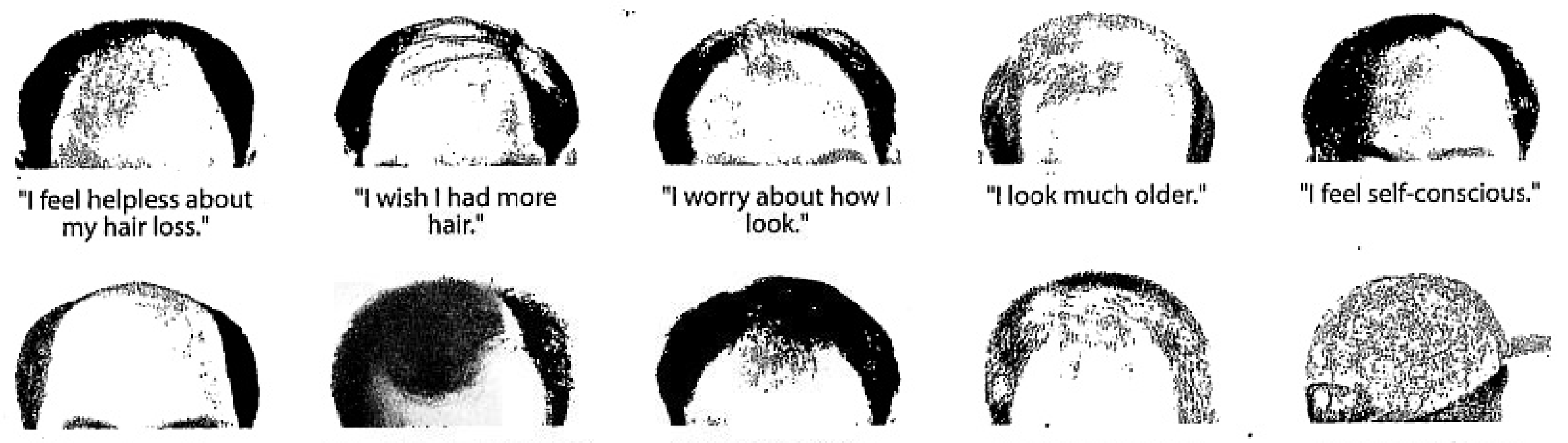
Lia S. Bernardo

MAY I request for some tips on "How to Make Meetings More Effective/Productive." My boss asked me to make a short 15-minute presentation on this next week and luckily, I saw your article in PDI. Though the topic discussed was different from my question, information was still targeted to office workers like me.

- Do arrive on time, better yet, arrive 5 minutes early.
- Do prepare, this is the most important thing you have to do before the meeting.
- Do plan your meeting, prepare an agenda. Lack of purpose causes aimless meetings that last long and do not resolve anything.
- Do have prepared answers to possible questions. If you are hoping they will not ask, chances are they will.
- Do stick to the agenda. Focus. Should additional matters be raised, park these until the topics on the agenda are fully discussed.
- Do take minutes as a record of what was discussed and action plans.
- Do cite the positives before the negatives when doing constructive criticism.
- Do give credit to your team for their contributions and ideas.
- Do be polite at all times, think before you say anything. Never get emotional.
- Do turn off your cell phone.
- Do watch your body language, no making faces if you disagree with someone, or rest on your head on your arms across the table.
- Do make sure you are dressed appropriately.
- Do summarize key points and agree on next steps when concluding the meeting.
- Don't knock down other people's ideas.
- Don't take credit for other people's work.
- Don't interrupt when others are speaking.
- Don't work on your work backlog; keep your attention on the subject being discussed.
- Don't have private conversations with co-workers while attending the meeting.
- Don't have your secretary come in with notes ever so often. Only do this for emergencies.
- Don't prolong meetings. Stick to the agenda and reschedule another meeting if nec-

GOODNESS/ B2-3

What's inside a balding man's head?



"I feel helpless about my hair loss."
"I wish I had more hair."
"I worry about how I look."
"I look much older."
"I feel self-conscious."
"I'm not as active as before."
"I don't look attractive."
"I'm less confident around people."
"I'm feeling more impotent."
"I want to hide my balding head."

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RUDY ESPERAS

JOLINA MAGDANGAL

The ultimate 'baduy' is a classy lady

But the term 'jologs' can also be traced to the actress

By Nini Valera

ACTRESS Jolina Magdangal is still a virgin. This is a rarity for someone who's 25 and in show biz. This is also what makes Jolina, the ultimate *baduy*, a classy lady.

But Jolina is embarrassed talking about it. She half-stands from her seat and makes out like she's walking out of this interview with INQUIRER Entertainment last Friday at the offices of Viva Films, which produced her latest movie, "Annie B, Bida Ng Ukay-Ukay, Bongga S'ya Day."

"*Oo naman* (Of course I am a virgin)," she says before the embarrassment set in. "What an ugly question. I'm leaving."

Turning serious, she says, "There are things you should take care of. I have values. In a way, I am even conservative. But I don't want to be hypocritical and say that I'd dress conservatively, too.

"But I don't want to talk about (virginity). I don't want to talk about it," she pleads.

She would rather talk about her being a fashion icon. She describes her sense of style as eclectic. But she admits that since she was called a fashion icon and imitated by young girls, she felt that she had to live up to the pressure of the label. But Jolina has outgrown that, too.

Dressing to please herself

"First of all, I dress for myself," she says. "I used to be conscious before, about living up to being a fashion icon, but not anymore. I wear what pleases me at the moment."

What pleases her at the time of this interview is a top made from multicolored pieces of fabric sewn in the style of sewing class in any exclusive girls' school. These pieces in fushia pink, teal and green were sewn together to make a strapless top worn with a pink sweater, and over tight blue jeans. With her hair pulled back into a pony tail, it's hard to see the fashion icon in Jolina.

"I wear what I like to wear," she says with pride. "People have called me *baduy* (tacky) or like a Christmas tree. I just don't care. Young girls have been dressing up like me, and I like that since they're innocent. They imitate whatever it is I wear or put on my body. Okay *lang* if they call me *baduy*."

She is also aware that the term "jologs" came from Jolina Organization, which she speculates is probably what the young girls who dress up like her have called themselves.

"I used to think that *jologs* was derogatory, that it referred to squatters," says Jolina. "But looking at other terms, like *bagets* or *jeproks*, it's just a catch word for a generation."

Queen of Ukay-Ukay

With Jolina on top of the *jologs* heap, it was only natural that she appear in the title role of "Annie B, Bida ng Ukay-Ukay, Bongga S'ya Day," where she plays the role of a vendor of a second-hand clothes shop, known as Ukay-Ukay.

The movie is apparently a take-off from the song "Annie Batumbakal" by the Hotdog Band. The song is about three decades old, and older than Jolina. But she claims to be able to relate to the concept and spirit of the song, which tells the story of a woman, who's a vendor by day and a disco queen by night. Written by brothers Dennis and Rene Garcia, "Annie B" continues to embrace a whole new generation that has yet to be weaned from rap and hip-hop, and lately, from R&B.

"I have sang 'TL Ako Sa Yo' and 'Panaginip,' which are Hotdog songs also," says Jolina. "I can relate to them even if they were originally done in the '70s. They are simple, *pang-kilig* (songs that send shivers up and down your spine)."

The song has also inspired a Nora Aunor movie when it was released in the '70s. But Jolina quickly says that her version is different from Nora's film.

"In fact, this is an entirely different movie," she says. "*Nakakatawa talaga* (It's so funny)."

It's easy to see in Jolina the young girl who's bent on enjoying life and her pop-star status.

"There are no regrets in my life," she confides. "*Bawal* (It's not allowed). I don't want to have disappointments. If I missed high school, it's compensated by my big savings. I never want to regret anything or not doing anything. I have to enjoy everything."

Proof of Jolina's enjoyment of life is a trailer, which she purchased from what was apparently an obscene amount of money, which she refuses to divulge.

"Never mind the cost, but it was *sulit* (worth it)," says Jolina.

Unfortunately, the BT Cruiser, equipped with bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and padded walls, has also triggered rumors of a congressman as Jolina's lover.

"Why is it that I have to have a lover who I supposedly met in Malacañang to be able to buy this van? Is it because I'm in show biz? I feel sorry for my mom who did all the work in buying the van. She was the one who negotiated for it, who had it repaired when it was destroyed during the shipping. I bought this van myself," says Jolina.

It has since become her source of contentment even when she's working for days on end.

"With the van, even when I'm taping, I can just take a shower when I feel hot," says Jolina. "I enjoy tapings now because of the van."

Another source of Jolina's joy is the Internet.

"Even if I am not in school, I feel that I can

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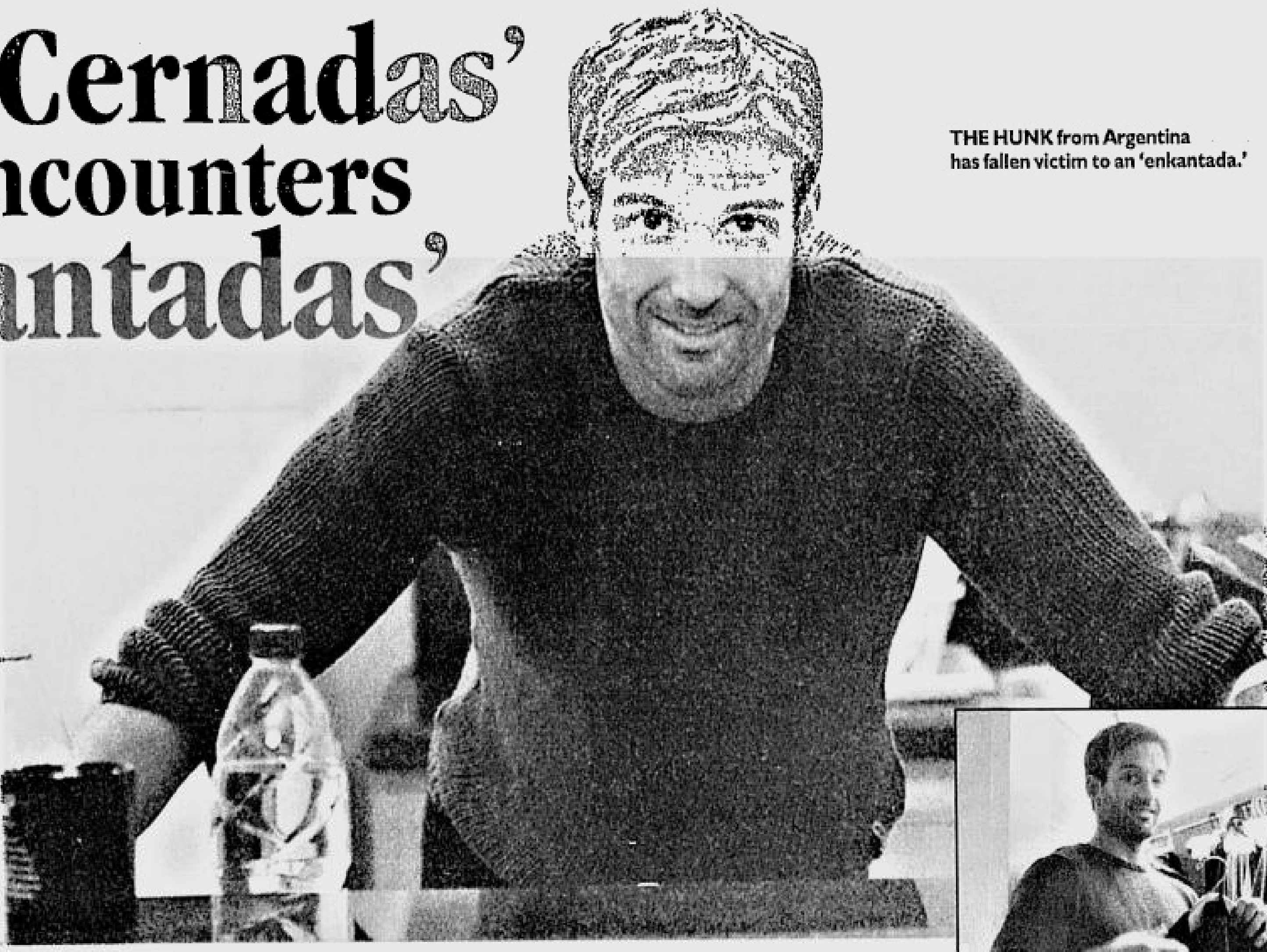
Segundo Cernadas' close encounters with 'enkantadas'



THE HUNK from Argentina has fallen victim to an 'enkantada.'

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

ARGENTINEAN superstar Segundo Cernadas is fast becoming *Pinoy*.

The star of GMA 7's top rating soap series, "Te Amo, Magpakailanman," says "Oo" for yes, pouts his lips to point and believes in folkloric characters like *kapre*, *tikbalang* and *enkantada*.

Better known to Filipino televiewers as Pablo in the hit drama series "Monica Brava," Segundo arrived in Manila last October to star in the fairy-tale love story opposite Iza Calzado, who plays the role of a poor fisherman's daughter.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

"Te Amo," directed by Khryss Adalla and Lore Reyes, premiered on GMA 7 last Feb. 8.

INQUIRER Entertainment visited Segundo last Thursday in his temporary home in a posh condominium unit in Makati City.

Barely four months since he started shooting for the soap series, the Argentinean hunk has already collected a lot of interesting stories, which he shares to INQUIRER Entertainment.

He looked fresh in a lime green tight-fitting sweatshirt, tie-dyed pants and brown loafers. He told INQUIRER Entertainment that he found the Filipino language easy to learn. He said he learned from his co-stars that "thank you" is "salamat" in Filipino and "mahal kita" "I love you."

But what he would remember most about the Philippines is his experience with what he called "elemental beings."

"Never in my life did I feel something like that," he said. "I don't believe in those things. I only see them in the movies. But I changed my mind after my experience."

He said that shortly after he arrived on the set of "Te Amo" in Ternate, Cavite, he had felt someone or something was always beside him.

"I feel this when I'm in bed or in the shower," Segundo said. "And in the middle of the night, a picture frame or the toilet seat would fall down without anyone touching it."

"Te Amo" executive producer Redgyn Alba, who was with Segundo during this interview, said she had noticed changes in Segundo two weeks after he arrived in the country.

"He started getting thin," she recalled. "During the first week, he would eat anything—*pochero*, *adobong pusit*, *kare-kare*. But after a week or two, he started having stomach aches."

Alba said Segundo had never told anyone about his experiences until co-star Elizabeth Oropeza talked with him one day.

"Tita Oro, who has a third eye, said she sees someone who's always behind Segundo, an *enkantada* who's infatuated with him," said Alba. "When she asked him if he believes in elemental beings, it was then when he started telling stories."

Alba said the villas where the cast of the soap is staying in Ternate are situated on the foot of a mountain. Ghost stories abound in the nearby town of Puerto Azul.

"That very same afternoon, we called an *albularya* (female quack doctor), who said she could see a tall, dark man behind Segundo. The man was very angry with him. We figured that it's either a *tikbalang* or *kapre*," Alba said. "The *albularya* said the man is very jealous of Segundo. Apparently, the *kapre* and the *enkantada* are an item."

"Segundo was very polite toward the *albularya*. We didn't know if he was scared of her or if he just wanted to laugh at her," she said.

"She spat on his head and forehead. She brought out a piece of paper with an image of the crucifix, put oil on it and wiped Segundo's forehead with it."

Segundo claimed he now feels better.

"But we made sure that his male assistant and driver slept with him in his villa from then on," said Alba.

Segundo's villa is on the highest part of the resort, she said. It was assigned to Segundo because it is the most secluded among the villas.

"When the guys arrived, there was a lot of noise in the house," said Segundo. "I forgot all about the ghosts. The noise must have driven them away."

Segundo, who flew to Buenos Aires for Christmas and New Year, said all of his friends were so dumbfounded when he told them about his experiences.

"They couldn't believe it," he said. "My mother gave me an *estampita* (good luck card). San Benito is the saint who protects you from the *mumus* (ghosts)."

After the ghost stories, Segundo gave INQUIRER Entertainment a look inside his closet. Here's what inside the hunk's wardrobe cabinet:

Jackets. "A very, very old sweater, about seven years old, is a favorite. I brought this from Argentina because I spent a day in Paris before coming here. It was winter at the time I was in Paris. The temperature was so low that I was still cold even when I was wearing three sweaters.

"I really don't like wearing sweaters, but if I have to choose a favorite among the ones I own, I'd go for the fleece kind. It's very thick, yet comfortable. We have snow in Argentina during winter. You can lie down on the snow without getting wet if you wear this sweater. It's water repellent. I have a lot of fleece jackets back home. I use them all the time. Here, never."

T-shirts. "I use a lot of shirts without sleeves. I don't know why. I guess it's because it's popular in Argentina. It's very comfortable. We use it to go to the gym, to the clubs, everywhere. My favorites are the old ones, especially this one from Levi's. I wear it to the gym more often than the rest.

"I also brought along one shirt that was given to me by a friend. It looks very old, although I've had it for just a year, because I use it very often.

"I also have shirts with long sleeves that I hardly use here because the weather is so hot."

Suits. "I've had this Mancini suit for two years now. I try not to use it because I hate wearing formal clothes.

"I got to wear a *barong* Tagalog when I judged for the Miss Asia Pacific beauty pageant last November. It was tailor-made for me. I don't feel too comfortable wearing it because of the buttons. I don't want clothes that wring my neck but since this is something formal, I'm not supposed to leave the top button open."

Necktie. "I only have three neckties with me right now. Two I bought here, and one from Argentina. There's nothing special about them, I don't wear formal clothes that often, anyway."

Pants. "I don't like formal clothes because I'm fond of wearing drawstring pants. I brought one pair from Argentina. It's blue and has white stripes. There, we call it *bali*. Surfers there wear this kind of pants all the time."

Jeans. "I don't buy many clothes here because my friends from GMA 7 would always give me some as gifts. But there's one pair of pants that I like to buy here. It's flared; I think it's from Chocolate. Perhaps I would buy those. But among the jeans that I have, I like this pair of green cargo pants. I'm not into denims much. I like jeans made of light fabrics because they are more comfortable. I also wear khakis when I have to be more formal."

Sleepwear. "I don't wear pajamas to sleep. I go for boxer shorts. These pair of shorts with heart prints was a gift from an ex-girlfriend. Would you really take pictures of my boxers? Oh no, my career is on the line (laughs)."

Shoes. "I prefer wearing sandals than shoes. I love wearing espadrilles. We call them *alpargatas* in Argentina. I've been wearing those kinds of footwear since I was young. My mother hates them. She would always throw them away. She would say, 'don't use more of that!'"

"Most of my shoes are in the set of 'Te Amo,' but I have this pair of rubber shoes that I use when I work out. I like old ones. They're more comfortable. But I like formal shoes to be simple. I have none of those shoes with buckles. I also don't like shoes that are too pointed or too round. I like the pair that I have right now. It's a classic."

Slip-ons. "I don't like these sandals, but a friend told me I have to have a pair just like it so I bought one. I told him only men who are gay wear them. In the end, I heeded his advice because I don't like shopping and I never know what to buy."

Belts. "I only have three—one for everyday use, one to wear with jeans and one to wear with the more formal clothes. I use belts just to hold up my pants."

MEDALLA de SAN BENITO

ESTAMPITAS keep Segundo safe from 'enkantadas.'

A CLOSET full of long-sleeved shirts that are discarded in favor of sleeveless T-shirts

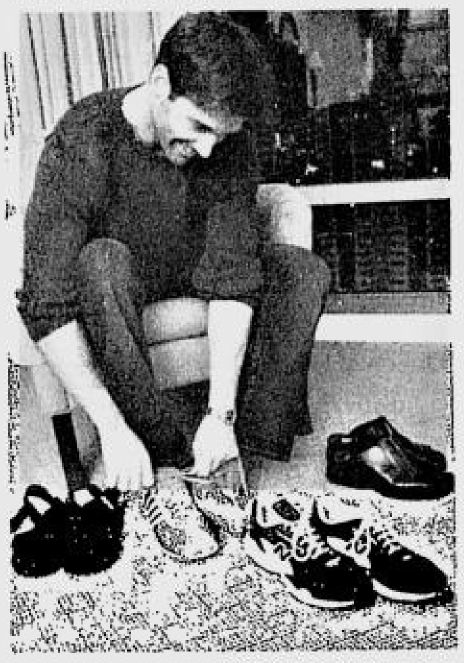
CARGO pants and drawstring pants, called 'bali' in his native Argentina, are Segundo's choices for comfort.

BELTS for holding pants with loose waistlines

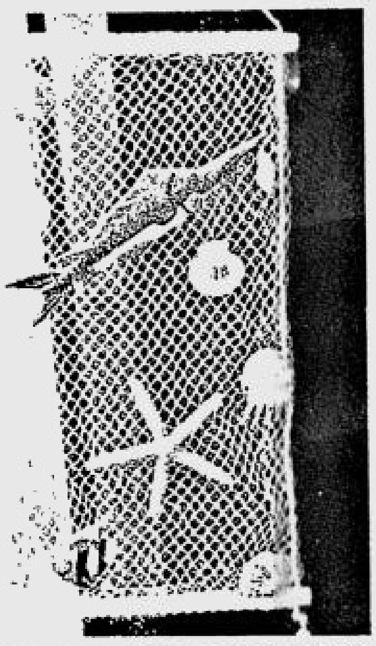
BOXER shorts with hearts printed on them are for sleeping.

A SUIT by Mancini is an old reliable for a man who hates formal wear.

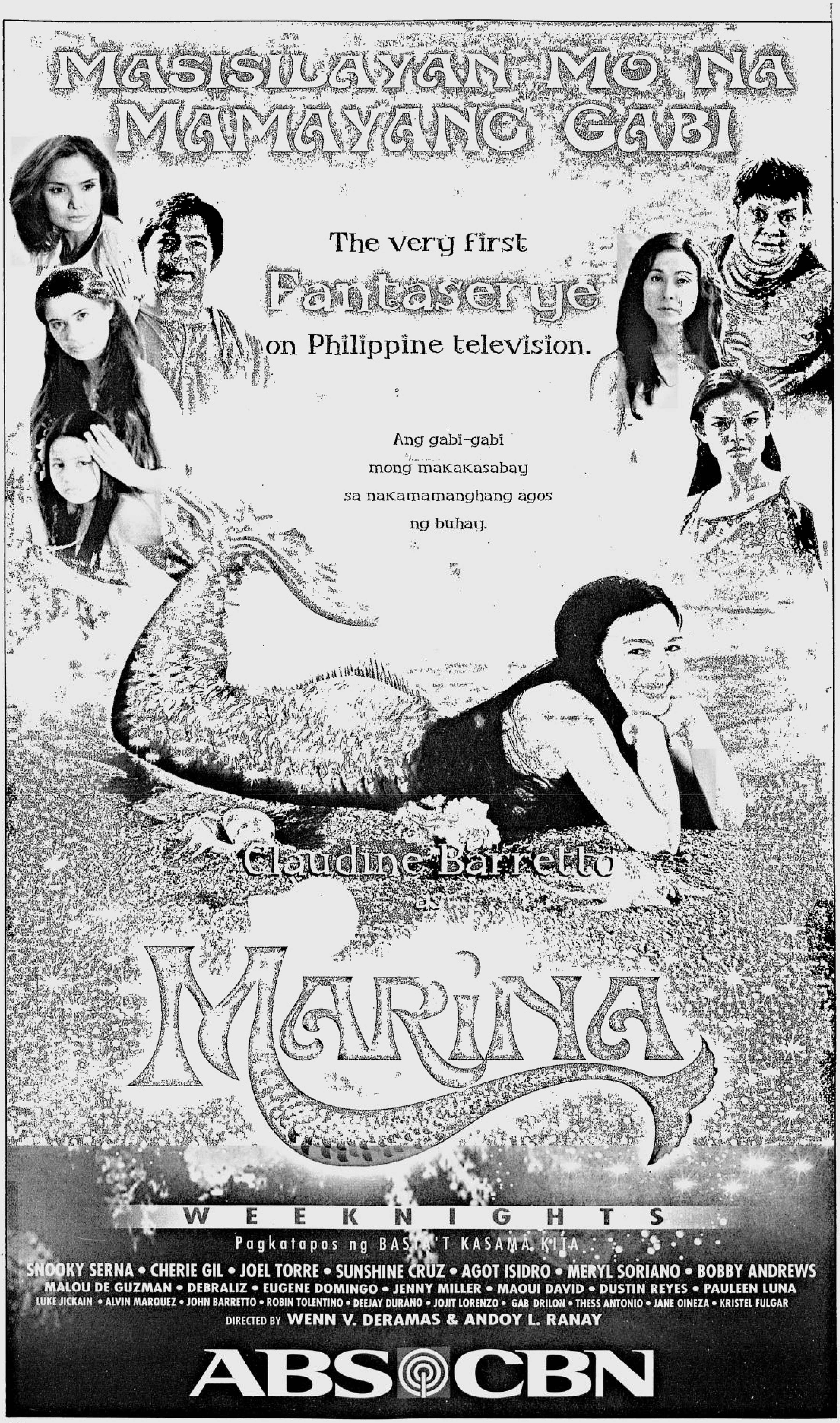
A BARONG Tagalog, tailor-made for Segundo, worn during the judging of a beauty pageant, is not Segundo's garment of choice.



'ALPARGATAS' or 'espadrilles' make for comfortable footwear for the hunk, who has walked in them in the beaches of Buenos Aires.



A DECORATIVE piece from co-star Jan Marini that recalls the sea and the life under the sea



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ABS-CBN

Losing Nestor is like losing a father, says Kaye Torres

By Marinel R. Cruz

TITO Nestor was like one of my own. Losing him was like losing a father."

This is according to Kaye Torres, daughter of slain actress Nida Blanca, who was Nestor's screen partner for more than two decades. The actor, who died of cardiac arrest in his home in Alabang, Muntinlupa, last Saturday, was also the favorite costar of Nida, said Kaye.

Nestor, Gines Francisco Soriano in real life, was 75.

"The loss of both my mom and *Tito* Nestor is a big blow to the entertainment industry," said Kaye in a telephone interview on "Star Talk" on GMA 7.

"Their friendship had gone a long way," she added. "I remember tagging along with them to shootings."

Complications brought by Nestor's cancer triggered the heart attack, his son, Joby Soriano, told INQUIRER Entertainment last Saturday.

Joby said his father's cancer was "very complicated." The family would rather not talk about it in public.

"It was a peaceful death," he said. "We were all beside him when he gave in to his last breath."

Nestor was cremated at the Funeraria Paz Chapel in Quezon City also last Saturday. Joby said it was his father's wish.

His remains lie in state at the New Life Christian Center in Alabang Hills Village, Muntinlupa, where Joby is a parish pastor.

Kaye said she had just watched "Talusaling," a movie which starred Nestor and her mother in 1955, at the Cinema Paraiso 2 festival at the NCCA building in Intramuros last Feb. 11.

"I felt sad that *Tito* Nestor died a few days later," she said. "Watching the movie made me feel as if they were still here."

Nida was killed in November 2001 at the Atlanta Center building in Greenhills, San Juan, where she worked as board member of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB). Nida's husband, Rod Lauren Strunk, is the principal suspect in her murder.

"It's sad that *Tito* Nestor died while my mom's murder case is still unresolved," said Kaye.

Nestor, a son of a *haciendero* from Nueva Ecija, came to Manila in the 1950s with plans of becoming a doctor. But he was discovered for the movies and signed a contract with LVN Studios, appearing in movies like "Dimas" and "Amor Mio" in 1951.

After playing lead roles in films opposite Tessie Quintana, Delia Razon and Charito Solis, Nestor teamed up with Nida in movies that became box-office hits like "Romansa sa Nayon," . that brought him fame and gave him matinee idol status.

He and Nida went on to make "Hijo de Familia," "Squatters," "Waray Waray" and "Tin-Edyer," "Darling Ko" and "Ikaw Kasi."

They were last seen together in the '80s film "Forgive and Forget," starring Sharon Cuneta and William Martinez.

Nestor and Nida also hosted the "Nida-Nestor Show" on ABS- CBN until 1971. The show won for him the best TV male performer award in the 1967 Citizen's Award for Television (CAT).

In 1984, Nestor retired from acting and became a Born Again Christian evangelist.

NESTOR DE VILLA. Big blow to the entertainment industry

"The Lord called him from the filmdom of stars to the Kingdom of God," said Joby.

In 2001, Nestor returned to the movies and appeared in Star Cinema's "Forevermore," which starred Jericho Rosales and Kristine Hermosa. This was his last movie.

British actor Matthew Goode enjoys Hollywood and Mandy Moore

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—"Beer! Here, everybody, have some beer! This is the fun interview!"

This is what newcomer British actor Matthew Goode is exclaiming to our group of all-female international journalists when he comes into the room holding a bottle of beer.

He opens the mini bar, grabs some more beer and distributes a bottle to each of the amused journalists.

The funny, self-assured and undeniably good-looking Goode is so at home this afternoon at a four-star hotel in the Avenue of the Stars. He casually asks for permission to smoke.

Dressed comfortably in a black cap, white and blue long-sleeved shirt and brown pants, Goode is feeling so at home in Hollywood that he sometimes even embellishes his sentences with the "f" word.

In his thick British accent, he says chirpily, "I have always wanted to go to f----g Disneyland since I was 12. So I'm so excited to be f-----g here!"

His kind of town

Goode, who portrays Ben Calder, a young British field agent for the Secret Service, in "Chasing Liberty," a Warner Bros. Pictures romantic comedy starring singer-actress and Manila visitor Mandy Moore, admits that "LA is my kind of town. There's just so many things going on here. I love the people but I hate the traffic."

A drama and theater graduate of the Birmingham University, Goode also studied classical theater at London's Webber Douglas Academy of Performing Arts aside from being trained by teachers who hailed from the prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company.

Among his credits include "Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister" with Stockard Channing and Jonathan Pryce and "South from Granada," the story of the English writer Gerard Brennan who was also a member of the Bloomsbury Group in Spain. For the movie, Goode had to memorize 58 scenes in Spanish.

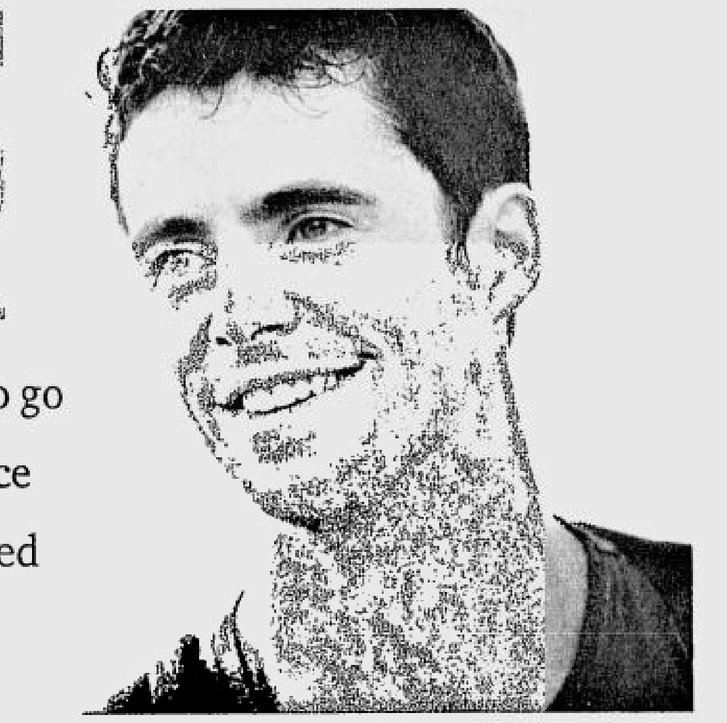
"It wasn't easy, you know," he says, laughing, "especially when they casually told me, 'Oh, by the way, you have three weeks to learn it!'"

Bizarre experience

With the help of a Spanish grammar coach, he learned all his 58 scenes in Spanish but, "after a lot of cussing from me. It was a bizarre experience."

As for his role in director Andy Cadiff's "Chasing Liberty," where he portrays the cute British guy on a Vespa, Goode admits that "I just love working with Mandy because she is so fun to be with."

'I have always wanted to go to f-----g Disneyland since I was 12. So I'm so excited to be f-----g here!'



BRIT NEWCOMER. Goode loves LA and his beer.

The young adult romantic comedy is the story of Anna Foster (Moore), the 18-year-old sheltered daughter of the president of the United States who longs for independence and freedom. She tries to escape from her Secret Service agents during a presidential trip to Europe with the help of Ben Calder (Goode) who happens to be outside the Opera Club with his Vespa. Unknown to Anna, though, Ben is actually a Secret Agent who also works for her father.

Credible

Oscar-winning producer David Parfitt ("Shakespeare in Love") confirms in another interview that "the American Secret Service has local agents in virtually every country where Americans have a presence so it's completely credible that an Englishman like Ben Calder would be working in cooperation with White House staff away from home."

"It was really a good experience working in Hollywood," confesses Goode in between puffs from his cigarette.

"I was paid cheap here so that was probably why I got the role," he says with a guffaw. Then he turns serious and says, "Mandy is so much fun to be around with. People kept mentioning the word chemistry."

Chemistry

He says this while using his fingers to draw quotation marks in the air. He smiles.

Did that "chemistry" make his girlfriend jealous?

"Let's just hope she does at the premiere," says Goode. "She doesn't give away anything that sometimes I wonder if she really likes me."

He breaks into infectious laughter.

He admits that he is new in this "girlfriend-boyfriend thing because I never really had a proper girlfriend until three months ago."

He refuses to give her name but describes her as "half Italian, half Irish and truly amazing." He adds half-seriously, "I think I am paying too much attention to her."

As Ben Calder, he has to pay a lot of attention to the stubborn, fun-loving Anna Foster.

"It's like a babysitting job which Ben really didn't expect to get into when he became a Secret Service agent," Goode says of his role.

When Anna (Moore) throws off her clothes and goes for a midnight dip in the Vltava River, did Goode see anything?

"No, I didn't see anything," he says with a naughty smile, "She had those big dots covering her."

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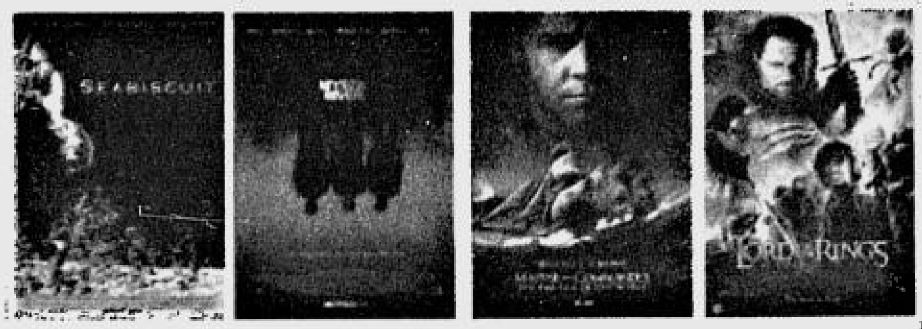

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Lord of the Rings 3 (PG)	[illegible]	Mystic River (R)	[illegible]	Mystic River (R)	[illegible]	Lord of the Rings 3 (PG)	[illegible]
Mystic River (R)	[illegible]	Lord of the Rings 3 (PG)	[illegible]	Master & Commander (PG)	[illegible]	Lord of the Rings 3 (PG)	[illegible]
Master & Commander (PG)	[illegible]	Master & Commander (PG)	[illegible]	Seabiscuit (GP)	[illegible]	Master & Commander (PG)	[illegible]

Watch The 76th Academy [illegible]

The ultimate 'baduy' is a classy lady

From page C1

still learn a lot of things by surfing the net," she says.

She would have wanted to remain enrolled at the University of the Philippines were she was taking up a certificate course in Theater. But show biz commitments forced her to take a leave of absence. Unfortunately, one of her professors did not sign the leave form, and Jolina was forced to quit UP.

She has since taken a home study course from AMA, which she endorses in print and television commercials.

"If I have more time, I would take up a course in Special Education," Jolina confides. "I'd like to study mongoloids. I want my next business to be a daycare center."

Ten years from now, Jolina might be raising her own children. If her timetable is met, she would be married at 27 or 28.

But ever practical, Jolina is not living her life for that.

"I don't want to expect something that might not happen," she says. "I take life as it comes."

MAGDANGAL. 'I don't like to talk about virginity.'

RUDY ESPERAS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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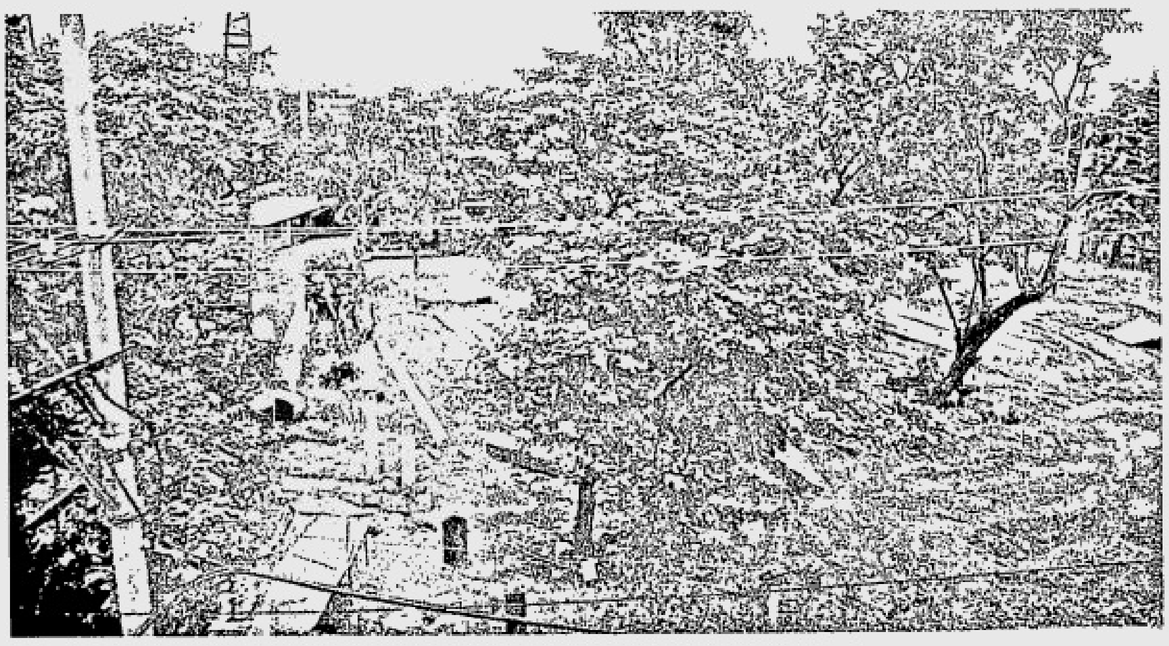
Bea Zobel returns to the Rocio
/D4

A CANCER survivor tries to recover his old health amid the greens of Arroceros Forest Park.


MEHAN Garden after the DENR stopped the construction. The site holds archeological riches.

Has NHI issued the death warrant for Mehan Garden?

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

WHAT appears the death warrant for Mehan Garden is a letter signed by the chair of the National Historical Institute (NHI) on Jan. 21 addressed to the Mayor of Manila.

That letter states that the National Historical Institute board "rendered its final decision on the proposal of the city government to construct the City College of Manila (CCM) within Mehan Garden, which is declared a "national historical site," and goes on to state that the CCM building can be constructed provided that certain conditions are met.

It looks like the kiss of death. It is not.

The National Museum also has jurisdiction over the site, and so does the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Mehan Garden and Arroceros Forest Park do not die unless the two agencies concur with the NHI.

Mehan Garden goes beyond being a historic site. Together with Arroceros Forest Park, it is one of the most important archeological sites in the Philippines that await full excavation. A cursory dig conducted by the National Museum three years ago yielded important artifacts, signifying that indeed thorough excavation is necessary for us to completely understand the earlier civilizations that lived on the site.

Most important, the area is one of those rare sites in central Manila where a surviving forest of mature trees regenerates polluted city air. That is something the city should protect if only to ensure the quality of life of the Manileño. Instead it wants to cover the area with concrete buildings.

NHI jurisdiction only covers the historic aspect of the site. PD 1505 states that the NHI has the final decision on whether a national shrine, which Mehan Garden is one, can be altered or not. Based on PD 1505 it granted permission for construction. However, historicity is not the main issue here.

The main issue for the Mehan Garden-Arroceros Forest Park area is archeological. The site is probably one of the country's most important archeological sites, stretching from the present Mehan Garden to the banks of the Pasig where today's Arroceros Forest Park is located.

Archeological site

The National Museum has designated the site as one of primary archeological significance. Therefore no construction can be done until a thorough archeological investigation is conducted. If the site yields archeological finds of exceptional merit, then the National Museum is empowered to stop any construction.

However the overriding issue for the Mehan Garden-Arroceros Forest Park area that the City of Manila has swept under the rug is environmental. The Mehan Garden-Arroceros Forest Park area is one of the last "lungs" for polluted city air to regenerate. That is why it should stay green.

Environmentalists have joined the Mehan Garden-Arroceros Forest Park cause because destruction of the park is a direct threat to human life. It means the loss of clean air in Manila.

The DENR revoked its environmental clearance certificate (ECC) issued for Mehan Garden pending the approval by other agencies with jurisdiction over the site. The NHI has given clearance. But until the National Museum issues a clearance, the DENR will not issue its ECC.

Has the NHI passed on the final responsibility to the National Museum? Has the City been talking to only the NHI and not to the National Museum and to the DENR?

Mehan Garden has been allowed to fall into decay. It now is more of a no man's land than it has ever been, its deliberate decay providing a convenient and obvious rationale to "upgrade" it to a school campus. But are we really talking of an upgrade here?

Please do not get the issues wrong. We fully support the need of the CCM to move to a newer, more up-to-date campus. Manila teachers likewise need a dormitory. But not in the Mehan Garden-Arroceros Forest Park area. Congested and polluted Manila needs that breathing space. We need that space for trees. There are other locations to construct the college and dormitory.

Conditions

Among the conditions given by the NHI for constructing the CCM campus on Mehan Garden is that City Hall assist and fund a comprehensive archeological assessment to be undertaken by the National Museum that shall give final approval before construction will commence, therefore throwing final approval to the National Museum.

Another condition is that the city commits to "use only around 14.30 percent of the total declared area of the Mehan Garden for construction of the CCM." This condition needs clarification. From the plans that I have seen, the building footprint indeed occupies 14.30 percent of the Mehan Garden area.

Aside from the 14.30 percent of the Mehan Garden that the building will occupy, there is additional space needed. Essential campus provisions, paved footpaths, student garden areas and playing fields, are not mentioned. The open area around the CCM building will have to be fenced out to keep the public from entering the campus. Are there schools set within the boundaries of parks where public and students mix freely? What about providing security for students?

It looks like most of Mehan Garden will become CCM campus. By default, Mehan Garden will be cordoned off. Not much green will be left for the public.

There goes providing open space and clean air for Manileños. There goes quality urban life.

Heritage lawyer Trixie Angeles says "the danger here is that the city will now claim that, given the NHI resolution, they can now proceed to build. Never mind the National Museum. Never mind the tree huggers."

She continues, "The timing of this decision is certainly suspect." The decision did come out just before the pre-election construction ban.

Do not fall for the smokescreen that the NHI is the ultimate authority over the Mehan Garden-Arroceros Forest Park area. The National Museum and DENR must likewise give their clearances before any construction starts.

The City of Manila has done well with redevelopment projects such as the upgrading of Roxas Boulevard and Avenida Rizal.

On the other hand, it continues with its dismal record in protecting our heritage, having demolished the Jai Alai building, replaced the Cuarteles de Meisic with a mall, and now muscling its way into Mehan Garden and Arroceros Forest Park.

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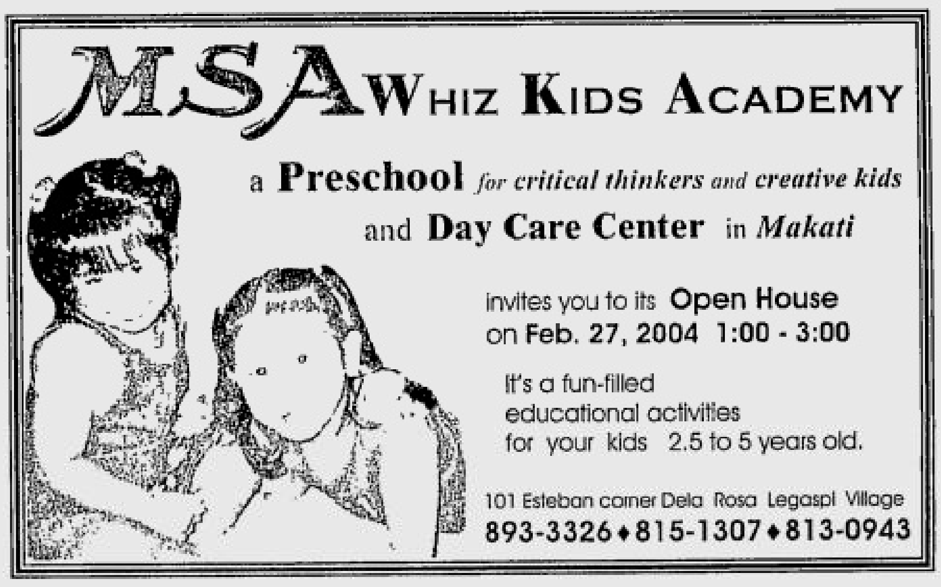
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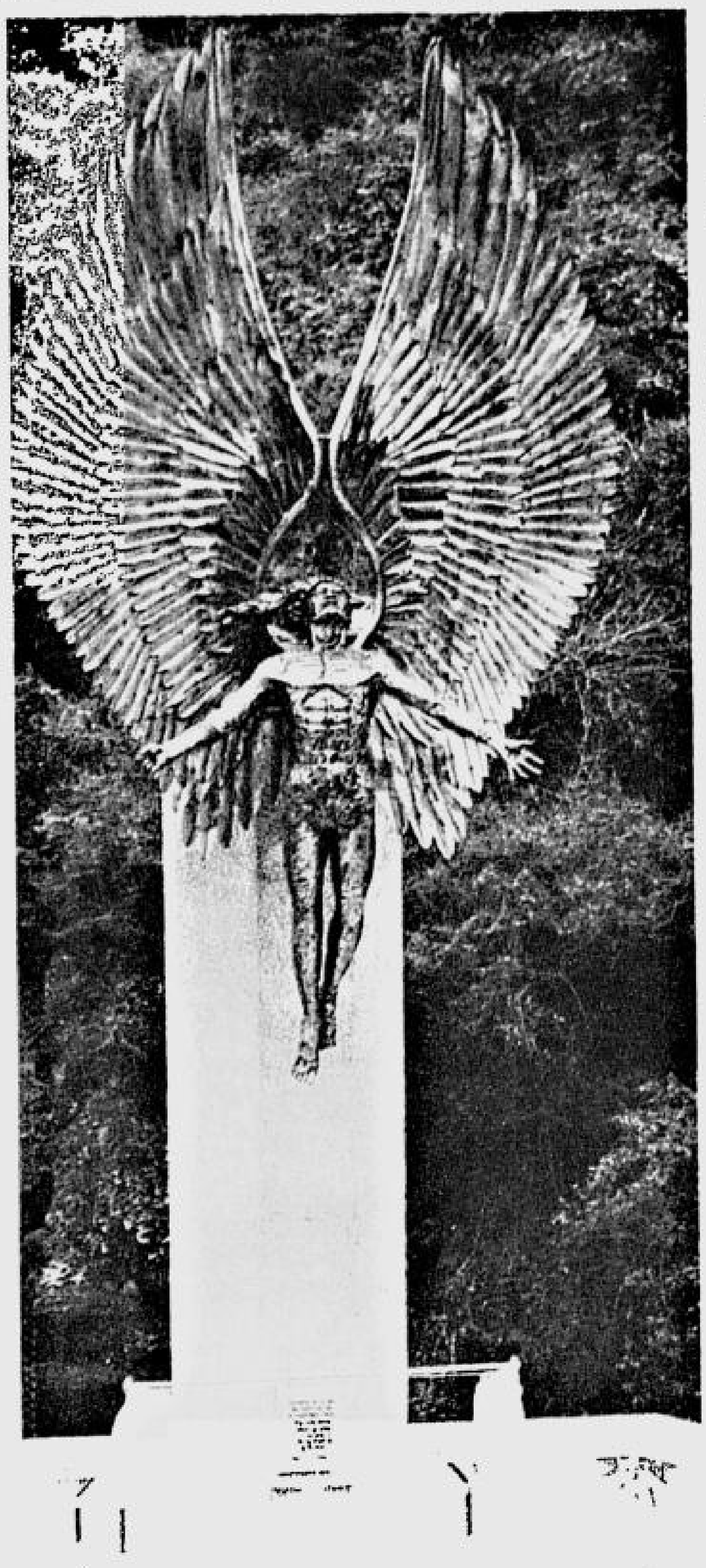
Angel descends on Morong

Text by Constantino C. Tejero
Photos by Rudy Esperas



"ARTISTANG Pilipino," a 30-ft-tall brass figure with wings of stainless-steel sheets unfurled

PAINTER-sculptor Rafael Pacheco with wife Cely

ON the morning of Feb. 8, painter-sculptor Rafael Pacheco and wife Cely hosted a gathering of artists and art lovers in Uugong Park at Barrio San Guillermo in Morong, Rizal. The couple meant to pay tribute to Art and Nature, particularly the Filipino artist and the natural world around the venue.

"*Lahat na* forms of art I pay tribute to," says Pacheco. "*Dahil ako ay walang edukasyon.* My education in art was inspired by the natural environment. *Hindi 'to* FPJ. I don't do this for the politicians... I'm a self-taught artist. Because of the arts I became a dreamer. Otherwise, I would have been *patambay-tambay lang—sugarol, adik-adik.*"

Known for his finger-painting and underwater imagery, Pacheco thrives on the tradition of folk art in that area of the lakeshore towns as popularized by José Blanco, Nemisio Miranda and Perdigon Bocalan of Angono.

The landscape on this part of Morong is shaped by slopes, terraces, precipices. Round the bend from the park's arch entrance, by the stairway to a pavilion, has been installed a slab of fiberglass high relief, "Cycle of Life."

A collaborative work by Jun Vicaldo, Joven Escudero and National Artist for Sculpture Napoleon Abueva, the relief depicts the townsfolk from courtship to wedding, pregnancy, birth, daily routine, death. It is inscribed with a passage from Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season, a time to be born and a time to die."

The panorama is of boulders, waterfalls, river, glorietta and pavilions. Ensconced amid crags and foliage are sculptures of human and angelic forms of brass sheets, varying from miniature to life-size and gigantic.

In 1987, Pacheco started developing this 1.3-ha place into a nature park and center for the arts. As official artist of Philippine Airlines in 1985, he had traveled and seen that "*napakahalaga ng* nature park *sa* development *ng* artist."

In his trips abroad, he also saw how world-class the Filipino artist could be. "*Walang kasing galing ang* Filipino artist. *Sa tingin ko,* Filipino artists are special children of God."

Metal giants

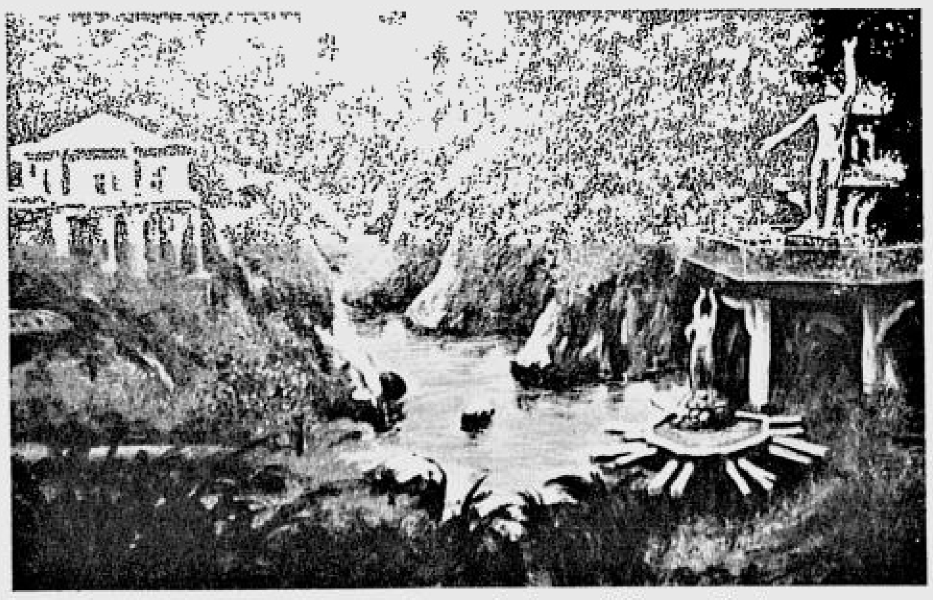
Pacheco first saw Uugong Falls and River the day after his wedding in 1959, when his bride brought him to the place. Since then it has inspired the water imagery of his art. He spent years trying to acquire the lot.

"*Ang lakas ng* attraction *ng* river *sa akin,*" he enthuses. "*Sino si* Pacheco without the river?"

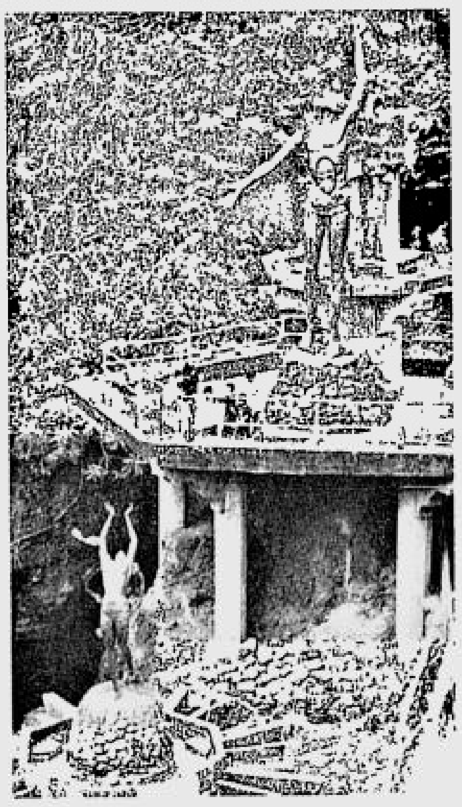
His tribute to Art and Nature, which he called "Alay," coincided with the town fiesta. It formally opened to the public his Dambana ng Kalikasan, a white concrete gazebo on the edge of a promontory overlooking Uugong River.

This altar to Nature he designed with the help of a computer and finished in 1½ years. It is adorned with marble tablets inscribed with passages from the Book of Revelation. He said he was inspired particularly by Chapter 22, describing the angel of the Apocalypse and the river of life.

To the choral rendition of "Diyos na Manlilikha" by the University of the Philippines Madrigal Singers, Pacheco's sculpture "Artistang Pilipino" was unveiled.



PACHECO'S vision of his nature park and center for the arts in Morong, Rizal



"JUAN" (top) and "Diwata ng Kalikasan"

It is a giant human figure of brass with wings of stainless-steel sheets unfurled. It could be an angel, or the master artificer Daedalus, that Joycean personification of the artist, poised to reach the heights, in the universal posture of artists.

With an installed height of 30 ft, its actual form is 18 ft tall and 11 ft wide. The sculpture took Pacheco one year and two months to finish. He said he spent two hours every morning supervising two workers in welding and assembling the artwork.

This completes his trio of metal giants, which he calls landmark sculptures. These include the 14-ft tall "Diwata ng Kalikasan" (five months to finish) and the 30-ft tall "Juan" (referring to John the Evangelist, author of Revelation, eight months to finish), also of brass sheets. The two have been installed on the lower part of the promontory.

Goddess of beauty

The launch gathered such diverse personalities as environmentalists Odette Alcantara and Narda Camacho, Imelda Marcos, Abueva, National Artist for Music Andrea Veneracion, filmmaker Laurice Guillen, actress Princess Punzalan, actor Johnny Delgado, composer Francisco Feliciano, Rizal Gov. Nini Ynares, Morong Mayor Jorge Bernardo, and Rotarians.

Alcantara opened her speech by saying, "*Ang Kalikasan ay mukha at katawan ng Diyos.*"

Interspersed with the speeches were song offerings by the UP Madrigal Singers.

The former First Lady declared the day as "*dakilang araw dahil araw na nag-aalay tayo ng dambana sa Kalikasan.*"

Then she went on: "*Nagsimula ang* persecution *sa akin at sa aking pamilya dahil sa* commitment *ko sa* beauty and culture. I anchored everything I did on culture. What is culture? It is God made real... The beginning of my relentless persecution started because I wanted to make God real in the good, the true, and the beautiful... *Mga kapatid, ano ang katotohanan?* God is truth..."

Obviously it wasn't a prepared speech. Her name wasn't on the program, so presumably the host invited her to speak on the spot, and it showed, as her speech started to ramble. Soon she was talking about the family, the barangay, participatory democracy, fundamental law.

She recalled her encounters with world leaders such as Mao, Castro, Saddam, Ghadaffi. "When they were terrorizing the world, I went there. *Ano ang aking dala?* I had no weapon. I had no money. *Alam n'yo kung ano ang aking dala? Ayan—ang mga* Madrigal Singers, *mga* Bayanihan dancers..."

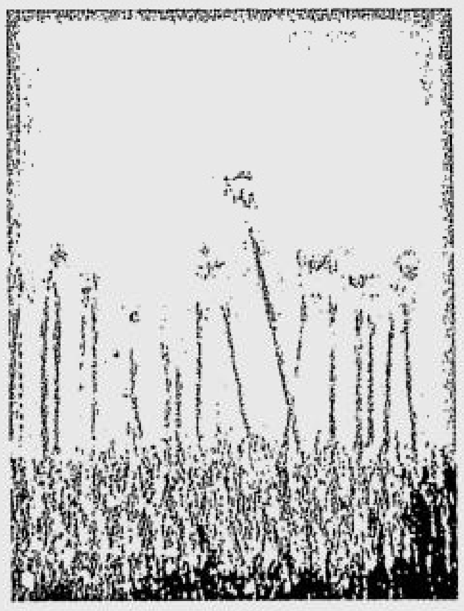
She said those were not just people ganging up on her, but governments, superpowers, yet she prevailed. "Nobody can touch you if you're on the side of beauty. *Ako po ay* allergic *sa pangit.*"

Her stunned audience broke into nervous laughter. At the end of her free-flowing speech, Feliciano had declared her "*pambansang diyosa ng kagandahan*" (national goddess of beauty).

And that was how Imelda Marcos stole the thunder from the giant angel of brass and steel.

Columnist finds another forum for environmental advocacy

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido



BUDDING Flowers

EMILY Marcelo has taken her passion for nature conservation in another direction.

The columnist of Libre, INQUIRER's sister publication, and co-host of the evening radio program "Kalikasan Vigilante" is now wielding a paint brush in an effort to remind people why they have to protect and preserve their natural environment.

The 75-piece "Nature in Oil" is Marcelo's first one-woman exhibit. Ongoing until Feb. 28 at Le Soufflé Bistro on Ruby Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, it was formally opened by Nestor Villanueva, the neophyte artist's tutor, and Myrna Buendia, the friend who encouraged her to take up painting.

Marcelo, who took up painting only last year, tried to capture nature's various moods on her canvases. The collection might seem schizophrenic with gaily colored flowers arrayed beside stark, leafless trees in muted hues. In several canvases, focus was just on the trunks of trees and the ground beneath.

Although the budding painter, who lived for several years in the United States, said her leafless trees were inspired by her love for the beauty of winter, some viewers saw them as more symbolic of loneliness.

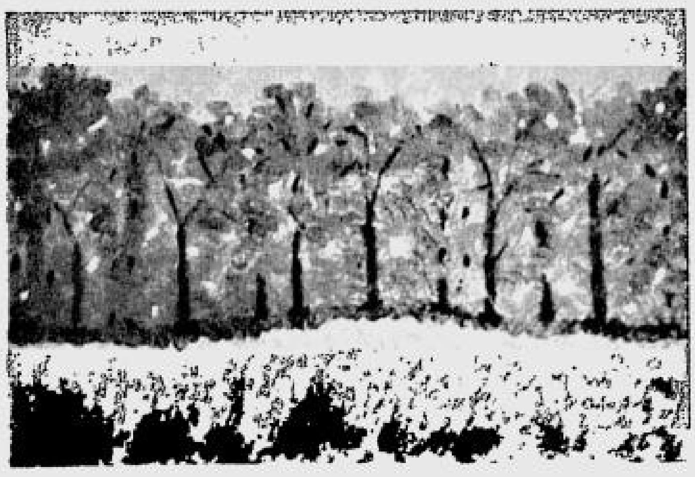
The artist conceded there might be something of that as well in the paintings.

"After all, life can be lonely just as it can be happy [citing the brightly colored pieces]," she pointed out.

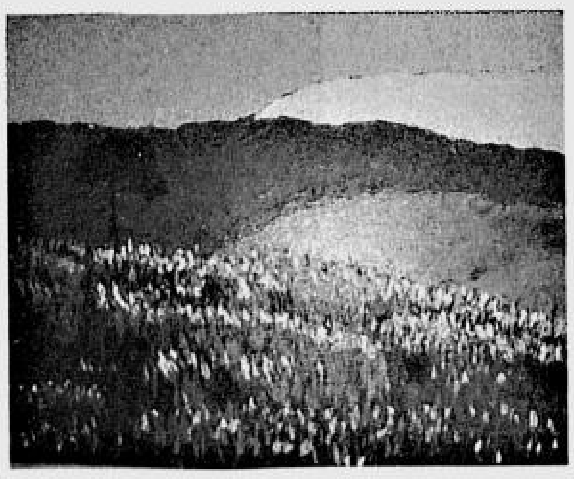
Whether the colors are bright or muted, Marcelo's nature, as depicted on the canvas, is pure and unspoiled by humans. No carelessly thrown soda can or plastic bags blowing in the wind. The meadows are neat, even well kept, and the water clear and clean.

Marcelo, while a novice as a painter, has been an art lover and collector.

She writes the advice column "Emily's Corner" for Libre, available for free at MRT Stations in Metro Manila, and can be heard 7:15-8:30 p. m., Monday-Friday, on "Kalikasan Vigilante," dwBR Business Radio, 104.3 FM, with co-host Vic Milan.



TREES



FLOWERS Galore

CHALK ART CONTEST

In celebration of the National Arts Month, the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Fine Arts and Sciences will hold the Thomasian Chalk Art Festival on Feb. 27, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. The festival, which will convert the streets into colorful galleries, is open to all students of Metro Manila. It will include a chalk-painting contest, performances, bazaars and a food fair. Call 7811815 and 7313101 local 8269.

Last chance to join text-a-poem contest

CONTESTANTS have one last chance to join the Dionatext Text-a-Poem competition this week. The contest ends at 5 p.m. this Friday, Feb. 27.

Genaro Gojo Cruz of Philippine Normal University and Juancho de Jesus of Quezon City were the TextMakata ng Linggo on the third week of the contest.

Winning consolation prizes are Lai Reyes of Las Piñas City; Arnie Gonzales of San Mateo, Rizal; Mark Lindsey Magboo of Bacoor, Cavite; Beverly Shane Palad of UP Diliman, QC; Antonio Concepcion of Calamba, Laguna; Melissa Tadeo of Antipolo; Jun Regalado of Kalookan; and Lorelei Chua of Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

Dionatext is sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts with the Filipinas Institute of Translation Inc., Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas, and UP Institute of Creative Writing.

Entries must be written in Filipino and must express love of family. They should be texted to 0927-4641814 at 0918-2252718. Entries must be accompanied by the name and address of the author.

The Week 3 winners:

Pinaglalawang kanin,
Binudburan ng asin,
Dasal pa ri'y taimtim.
Genaro R. Gojo Cruz

Paa ay lipak-lipak,
Sa maghapong paglakad,
May uwi lang sa pugad.
Juancho de Jesus

Returning to the Rocio

From page D4

er girls, where we had all our colorful dresses hanging like a canopy on top of our heads!

Monday morning at dawn, the villagers from Almonte had the privilege of being the only ones who could perform the ritual of assaulting of the wrought-iron grill protecting the Virgin. The young men of Almonte literally fought each other to take hold of the wooden structure on which the Virgin was carried. They carried her for 12 hours through the dusty streets where she was received with shouts of hurrah and applause. Children were sent rolling on top of thousands of heads to touch the Virgin. Miraculously they were sent rolling back to the right parents! Many people tried to get under the Virgin to carry her off, but they were fought back by the Almonteños.

I was asked by an elderly man, a friend of Juan's, if I wanted to touch the Virgin. I couldn't believe the proposal of this gentleman as I could barely see the statue. There were so many people gathered around her. When I asked him how he intended on getting me near her, he stood behind me and grabbed me under my armpits and started pushing me forward! I let myself go. I was at the mercy of this man and all I saw was a hurricane of human bodies all pushing against me.

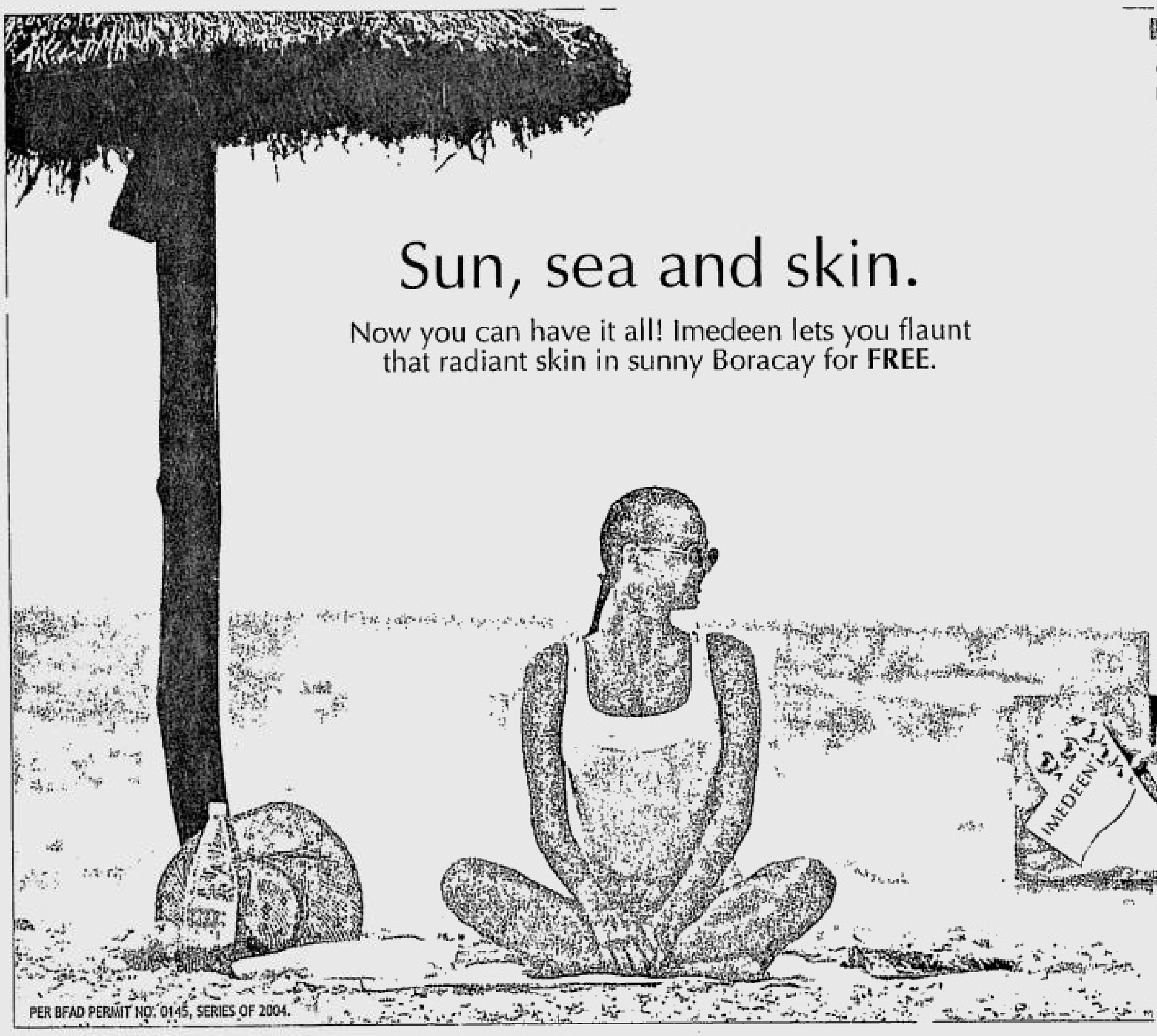
I was getting near the statue, I extended my arm out but exhaustion overcame me. At the moment when I could have touched the Virgin I dissolved into laughter! Yes, you read it right, I could not stop laughing! It was a mixture of disbelief, exhaustion, devotion and feeling I was in a terrible dream. My friend kept shouting, "Touch her, touch her." But I never touched her. I stood to one side helpless in my laughter. It took me some time to calm down. The crowd just passed me by. Eventually the Virgin resumed to her throne in the elegant church where Mass was held every day and the rosary was prayed.

Never had I witnessed an event where the profane and the devout flourish side by side, where the Lady from the Church meets the Lady dancing on the Street. A truly unique experience and a truly exhausting one. I was happy to finally go home having been part of my husband's family's return to the Rocio.

E-mail beartist@filipinaslibrary.org.ph or address letter to Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.

WITH FRIENDS in front of the "*sin pecado*"

A CANOPY of Sevillanas dresses



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0266 Series of 2004.

Returning to the Rocio

WHEN reading about the incredible fiestas in the Philippines, like the Nazareno procession in Quiapo, I often wonder how they compare with the ones in Spain.

I once attended a *romeria* in Spain, a kind of festival where pilgrimages, worship, folklore and popular culture mix. It takes place in a rural setting—in the village of El Rocio in the province of Huelva, to be exact.

This particular fiesta's origins go back to the 13th century when, according to legend, the Virgin Mary appeared to a hunter from Almonte, who had lost his way in the wetlands. The Almonteños later built a small chapel to Our Lady of the Rocio (Dew) on the spot of the apparitions.

Due to earthquakes and the growing number of pilgrimages to this village, the church has been repaired and modified to accommodate the large number of people. Today, more than a million people celebrate this *romeria*, but the village of Almonte claims the Virgin belongs to them and that their fraternity of devotees is the oldest.

ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

Never had I witnessed an event where the profane and the devout flourished side by side

My husband Juan died nine years ago. If there was one thing that characterized him, it was his love of organizing complex events. His family had been going to the Rocio without fail for the past 20 years. Every year it fell to Juan to organize their family pilgrimages. He actually anticipated the day of the fiesta with great excitement. It was as if he had had a secret pact with the Virgin which he kept faithfully.

Every year when he would go to the Rocio, I never went with him. Of course, he probably preferred going on his own as he never asked me. On my part, I felt I was giving him the space he deserved, although I did wonder what he did there that left him exhausted, without a voice, with bloodshot eyes, as well as filmy clothes!

Two years after his death, I didn't know what possessed me. Perhaps it was the feeling of guilt that I should have accompanied him like a dutiful wife. I asked my father-in-law to take me to the Rocio. My father-in-law was speechless for a couple of minutes. He had never returned to the Rocio after Juan's death. It probably opened too many wounds and was a painful reminder of his son. But he saw me so determined that he decided to make an exception that year.

I knew that since he was making an incredible sacrifice for me, the least I could do was prepare myself thoroughly for this experience. Then I realized to my horror that going to the Rocio also meant dancing the Sevillanas! Just to give you some idea of this dance I will say that it is something like the flamenco. I had no idea how I would manage to learn the steps!

ME, in my matching dress and wagon, with Juan Ramon

Having grown up in the Philippines in the '60s, I, like so many other tortured girls my age, had only taken up Hawaiian dancing (maybe today it would have been the *ocho-ocho*). When I married Juan, I was always left in a corner during parties as Sevillanas was always danced between disco songs. Still I was not tempted to ever learn it as it was difficult.

I do, however, find it very provocative and sexy. You are guaranteed to lose your husband or boyfriend for a few hours to those gorgeous Spanish dancers. I remember having terrible jealous rages!

My first stop was to get fitted with the typical Sevillanas dress. I learned that the accepted fashion for these dresses changed every year. One had to be updated so as not be out of step! Yes, I was going to be a Sevillanas fashion victim! That year the trend was either a mixture of flowers or plain bright colors. My sisters-in-law took me on a six-hour train ride to the south of Spain to San Lucas de Barameda. We went to a small shop owned by a sweet old lady who was renowned for her Spanish dresses. Despite previous information that the sweet old lady charged reasonable prices, I nearly fainted when I found out what her creations were going to cost me! What we really got to me, though, was learning that I needed three day dresses and three evening dresses!

Dreaded Sevillanas

So began my study of the dreaded Sevillanas. It requires your arms going one way while your feet are busy going another way! I had private lessons with this dynamic woman. Eventually, in a moment of desperation, I finally convinced my father-in-law to allow me to take my teacher to the Rocio. This way I figured she could whisper the next move as we danced. At least I would have my security blanket!

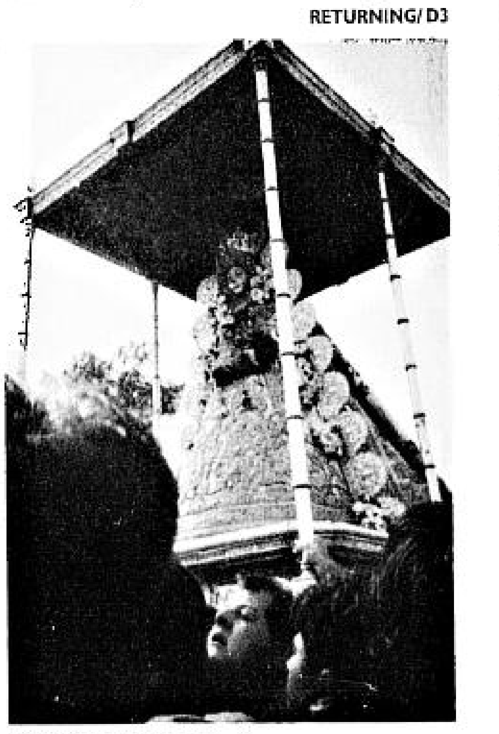
Finally, the great day arrived. I had sent my six dresses ahead with the procession of covered wagon, and horses which my in-laws provided. In order to attend the Rocio, one is required to join an organization of devotees. These are called *hermandad*. We were to join the *hermandad* of Olivares, which had been my in-laws' group for 20 years.

Members marched on foot, rode on horseback, or in the covered wagons through the dry, dusty plains of the Guadalquivir. It is a three-day journey to the village of El Rocio. Hundreds of brotherhoods converge from all over Spain, all with the same aim. Each group is preceded by the "*sin pecado*" or standard with the image of their Virgin. For three days we all braved the heat, we all walked long hours, or rode on the horses and wagons. We all slept on the sand in tents and sleeping bags.

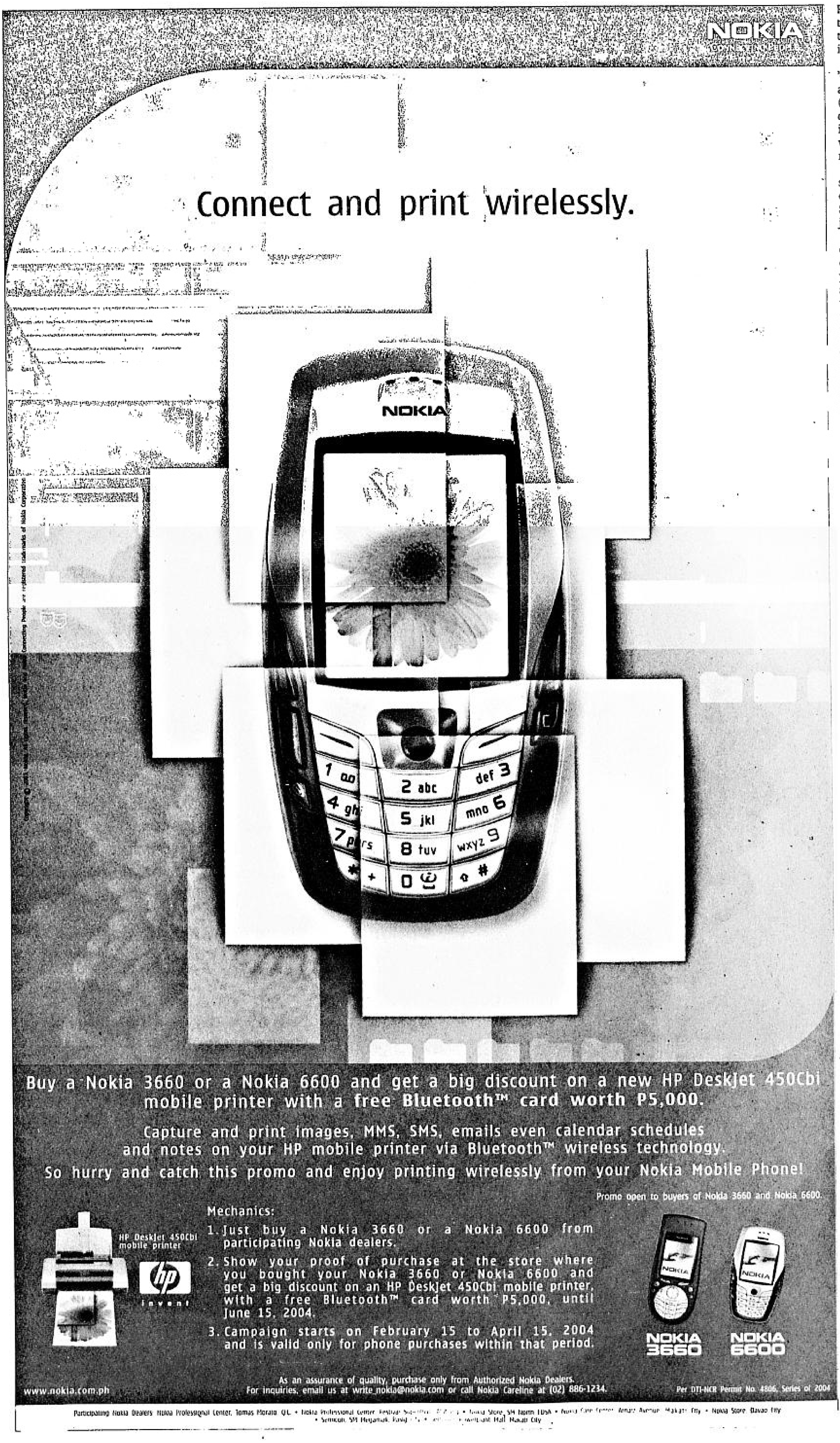
Along the route we would stop frequently to sing, dance, pray, drink *frio* and Jerez. By the fourth hour of this, my hands and feet were gracefully aligned and all signs of shyness disappeared!

When we reached the village of El Rocio, we went to our modest rented house. The dancing and singing never stopped. There were musicians strumming guitars, Sevillanas and Flamenco being danced at every corner as well as drinks flowing. I shared a room with eight oth-

RETURNING/ D3



THE VIRGIN of the Rocio



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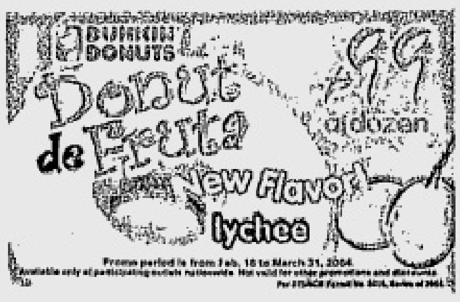
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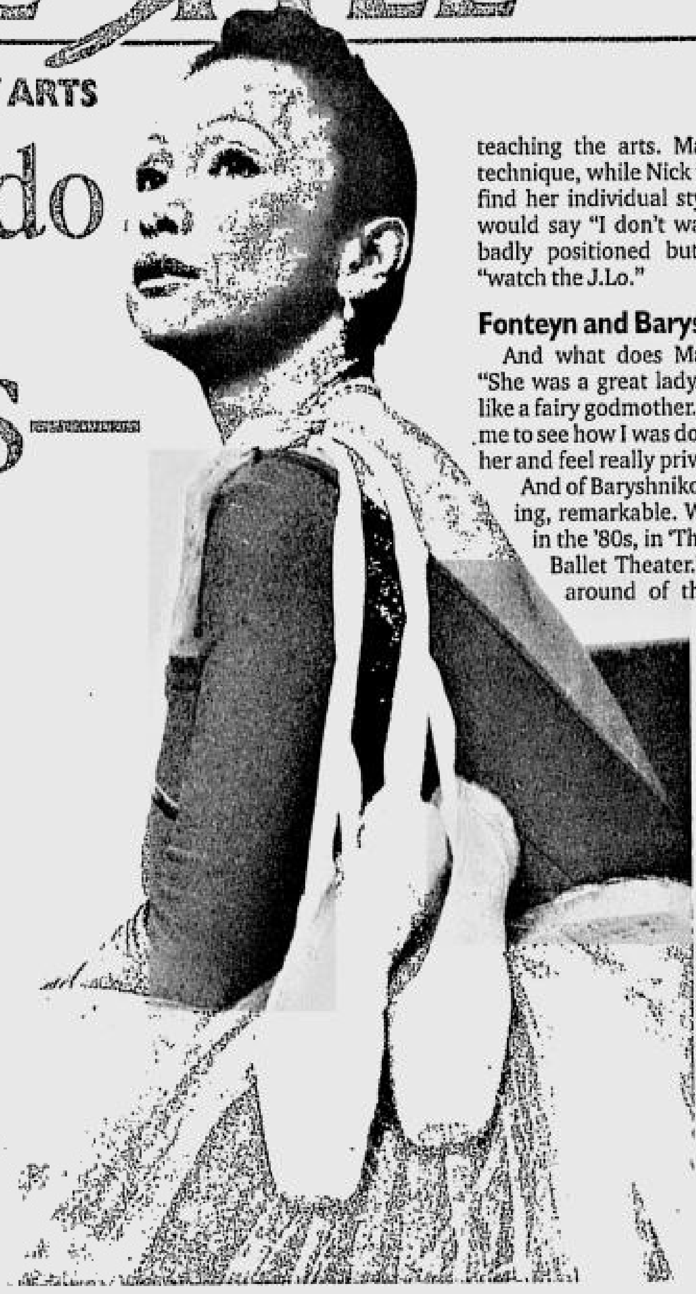
LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS

Maniya Barredo hangs her toe shoes—but not quite


SHE was proclaimed by no less than Dame Margot Fonteyn as "Prima Ballerina"

By Mona Gonzalez
Contributor

> The famous prima ballerina of the oldest ballet company in the US was recently in Manila to teach dance scholars the 'Maniya split'

NOT many people lunch with the legendary Margot Fonteyn, dance with the spectacular Mikhail Baryshnikov, and earn their esteem and friendship to boot. But Maniya Barredo, the petite Filipina ballerina, has done all that—and more. She is, as American talk show host Kimberly Kennedy of "Positively Georgia" said, "one of the world's best prima ballerinas."

We were sitting on the floor of a ballet studio in Mandaluyong, watching a reel of American talk and television news programs announcing that Maniya Barredo was "hanging her toe shoes." A voice-over announced her achievements while excerpts of her last performance ("Romeo and Juliet") were shown. "(She) danced with Baryshnikov... was proclaimed prima ballerina by Dame Margot Fonteyn... brought fame to the Atlanta Ballet." As the reel went onto the fifth program, a voice in the back of the room impatiently said, "Turn it off. Enough already."

That was Maniya, ever self-deprecating.

Maniya had come home to conduct a free master's class for the best students from the various schools of the Association of Ballet Academies of the Philippines (Abap). She has lots to brag about, but she'd rather dance.

No height fright

Standing only at 4'11," Barredo's achievement is no small feat. After all, ballet calls for height. Struggling with such "handicap" should give you an idea of the kind of person that she is. She blames her spunk on her mother (who was also a dancer). Her first ballet teacher was Julie Borromeo. Her work ethic and commitment landed her at age 18 in New York's renowned Joffrey Ballet, where she stayed for 10 years.

It was there that William Griffith spotted Maniya's potential, and mentored her for 10 years. "He saw things in me that I never saw in myself," she recalled. "I just knew that he saw my heart. I was willing to put forth 200 percent."

Love at first sight

When Maniya auditioned for the Atlanta Ballet, it was love at first sight—with the city and with the company. Atlanta Ballet is the oldest dance company in America at 75 years. But when Maniya joined it, it was just a small regional civic company worth about $200,000. By the time she left 18 years later, it was worth $5 million.

"We started hiring better dancers and improved the repertoire," she said. And at the forefront were two Filipinos—Maniya as prima ballerina, and Nicholas Pacana as premier danseur.

A few months earlier, this writer had the privilege of watching Pacana (he likes his students to call him "Mr. P") giving a master's class for Abap. We attended both occasions at the invitation of my daughter's ballet teacher, Chelo Borromeo-Gemina who heads the VLI Dance Academy in Fort Bonifacio.

Like Maniya, Nick was most exacting and demanding, though they had different approaches in teaching the arts. Maniya would focus on technique, while Nick would help the student find her individual style. And while Maniya would say "I don't wanna see ski slopes" of badly positioned butts, Mr. P would say, "watch the J.Lo."

Fonteyn and Baryshnikov

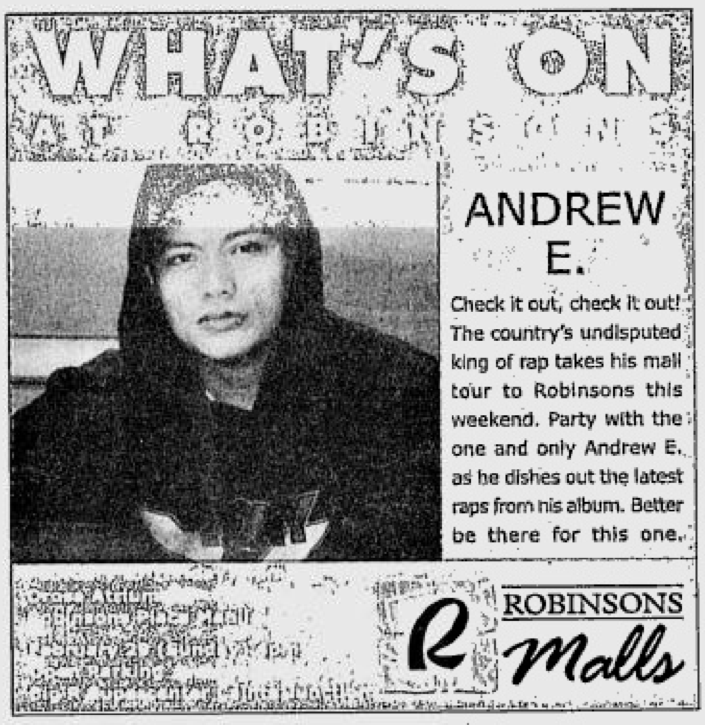
And what does Maniya say of Fonteyn? "She was a great lady. She watched over me like a fairy godmother. She'd call me, check on me to see how I was doing. I'd have lunch with her and feel really privileged."

And of Baryshnikov? "Awesome, frightening, remarkable. We danced Don Quixote in the '80s, in 'The Stars of the American Ballet Theater.' Misha is the most all-around of the male dancers. He'd dance just enough—no more, no less. He'd be boyish one minute, princely the next. And he's constantly reinventing himself, doing theater, movies. There's the student in him that constantly wants to learn."

It was a joy watching Maniya conducting Abap's master class. She paid close attention to details, referring to specific thigh muscles in one step, the curve of the toe in another. She could be humorous, but make no mistake. As a teacher she was both exacting and demanding.

"An elephant can go through those legs" she'd say, then add, "instead, it should be a flea going through those legs." Sometimes she'd demonstrate how a step should and shouldn't be done. In the latter she'd become

MANIYA/E3


WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

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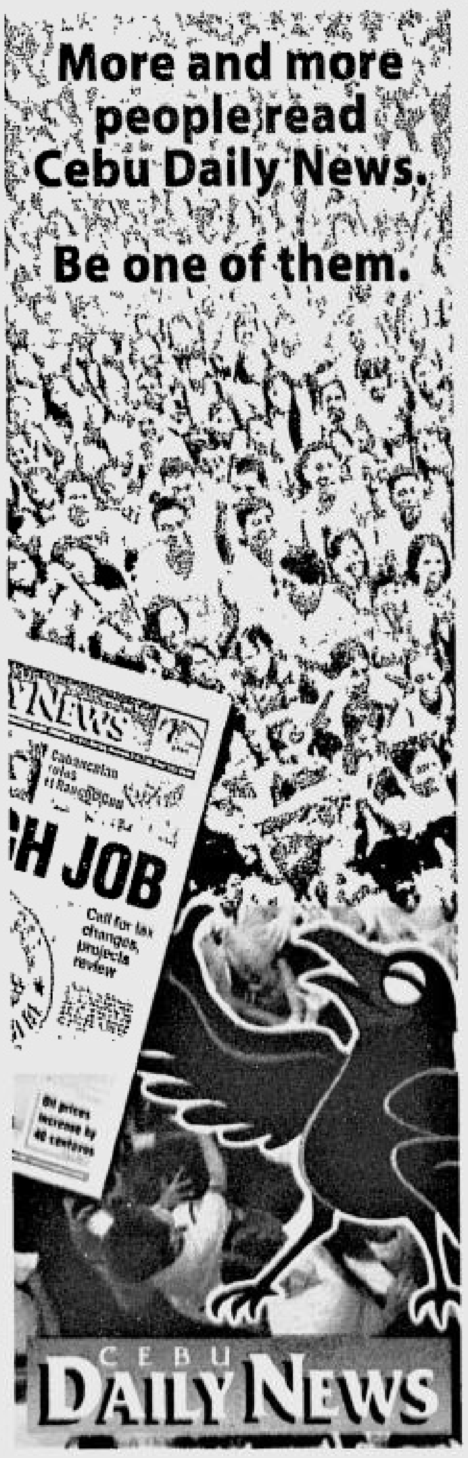
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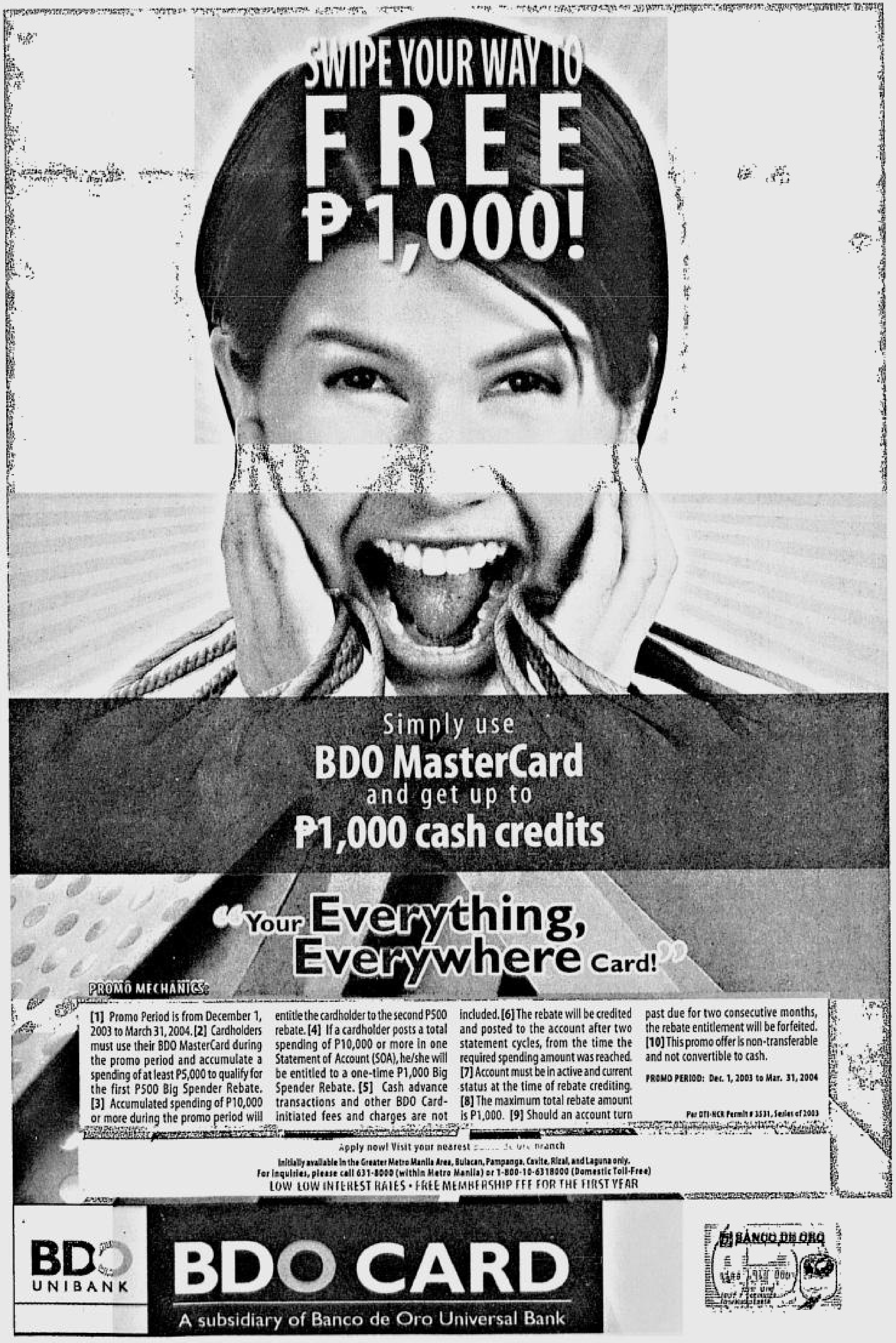
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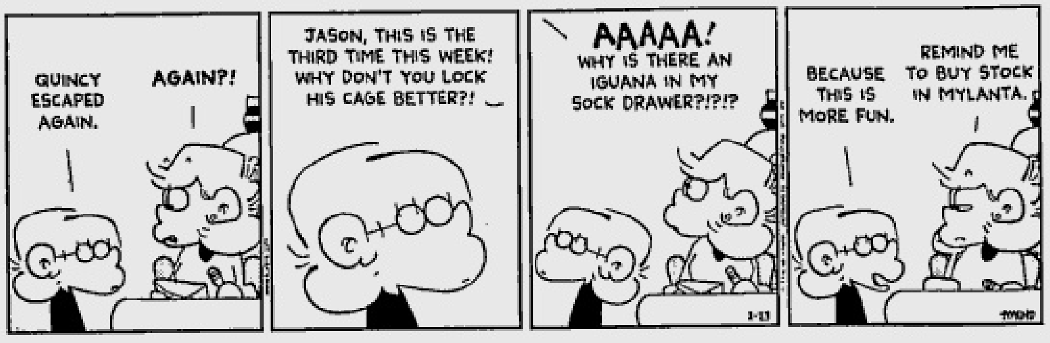
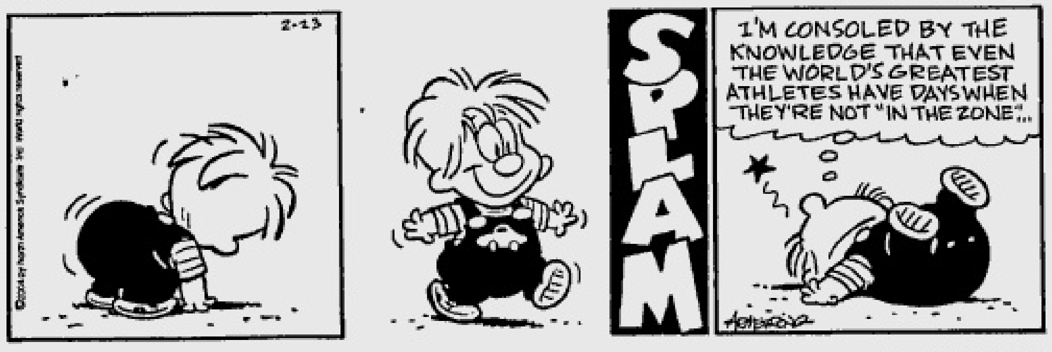
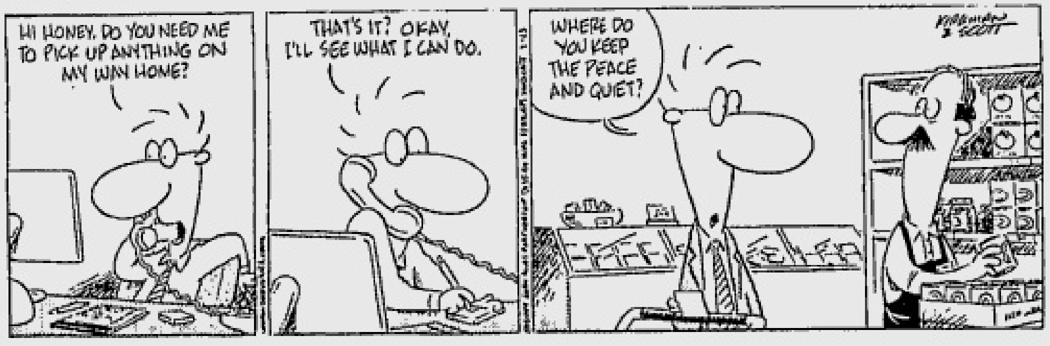

QUINCY ESCAPED AGAIN.
AGAIN?!
JASON, THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THIS WEEK! WHY DON'T YOU LOCK HIS CAGE BETTER?!
AAAAA! WHY IS THERE AN IGUANA IN MY SOCK DRAWER?!?!?
2-23
BECAUSE THIS IS MORE FUN.
REMIND ME TO BUY STOCK IN MYLANTA.

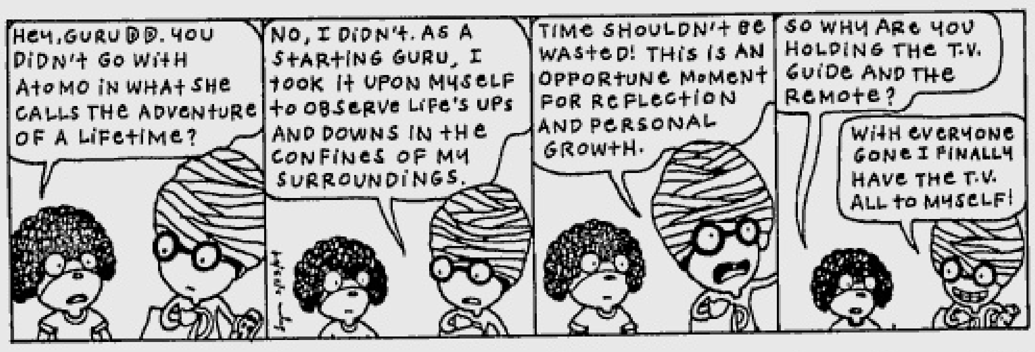
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


2-23
SPLAM
I'M CONSOLED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT EVEN THE WORLD'S GREATEST ATHLETES HAVE DAYS WHEN THEY'RE NOT "IN THE ZONE"...
ARMSTRONG

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


HI HONEY. DO YOU NEED ME TO PICK UP ANYTHING ON MY WAY HOME?
THAT'S IT? OKAY, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
WHERE DO YOU KEEP THE PEACE AND QUIET?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, GURU DD. you DIDN't Go with Atomo in what she calls the adventure of a lifetime?
No, I DIDN't. As a starting guru, I took it upon myself to observe life's ups and downs in the confines of my surroundings.
Time shouldn't be wasted! This is an opportune moment for reflection and personal growth.
So why are you holding the T.V. guide and the remote?
With everyone gone I finally have the T.V. all to myself!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY You are giving and open to others. In fact, your generosity will sometimes extend to the point of sacrifice. You believe in working for the common good as a philosophical principal. You are truly unselfish. On the other hand, this is your path to your own happiness. The year ahead holds major changes (similar to 1993).

Birthdate of: Kristen Davis, actress; Billy Zane, actor; Paula Zahn, TV journalist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Be careful about spending money today. Something you do might not achieve your intended purpose. You could end up with something that is not useful or helpful to you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Don't tackle bosses, parents or VIPs today. Avoid conflict. Whatever you do tends to easily be misconstrued or misunderstood. Wait until another day to make your point.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) There's no point in arguing to defend your religious or political beliefs today. Even though you think your know what you want to say, you will be misunderstood. Tread carefully.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) This is not the ideal day to share something or borrow anything. Confusion between yourself and friends and groups is likely. Some might question your motives.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Bosses, partners and close friends might misinterpret your actions. Try to be very clear in whatever you say or do today. Watch out for deception from others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Don't be tempted to take questionable shortcuts at work. You might want to duck out of something or hide work you don't want to do. (You could get caught.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) It's easy to be tempted to be dishonest today when dealing with children, or when doing anything related to sports, gambling and the entertainment world. Take the high road. Avoid this deception.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Confusion in discussions with family members is likely today. People say things they don't mean; furthermore, their ability to communicate the truth is limited. Things are foggy.

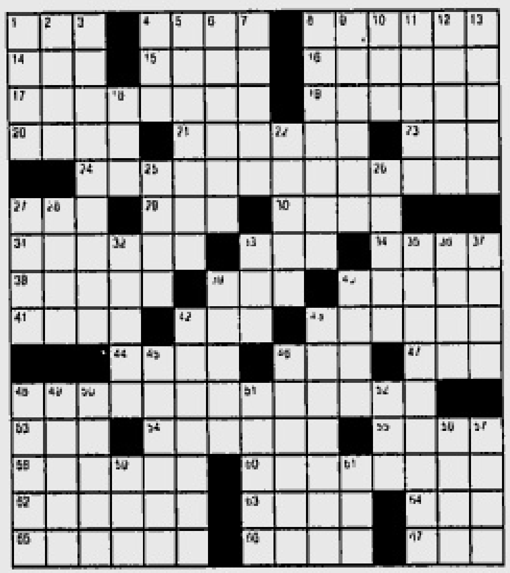
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be careful about liquids and chemical reactions. This also applies to food poisoning. Do not ingest, eat or swallow anything questionable. Wash your hands a lot today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) This is a dicey day for gambling and financial speculation. However, your creative vibes are excellent! Stick to artistic self-expression, if you can.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Because you want to avoid something unpleasant, you might be loose with the truth today at home. Remember that it takes years to build up integrity and respect, and only one moment to lose it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Take precautions driving, walking, jogging, etc., today. Your mind is too easily distracted by other things. If you can't be honest with others today, say nothing.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Bruce Venske & Stella Daily
Madison, WI

2/23/04

ACROSS
1 Possesses
4 Lupino and Tarbell
8 Stick
14 Circle section
15 Ernie's Muppet buddy
16 Loan shark
17 Start of a quip
19 Commuting
20 Late-night Jay
21 Gliding ballet movement
23 AFL-__
24 Part 2 of quip
27 Friend in Marseilles
29 Afore
30 Approximator's phrase
31 Greek letters
33 PSAT takers
34 Garr of "Tootsie"
38 Apportion
39 Part 3 of quip
40 Strong winds
41 Lead actor
42 Math subj.
43 Native skill
44 1901
46 Major ISP
47 Bus. bigwig
48 Part 4 of quip
53 "Evil Woman" rock grp.
54 Experience summary
55 River to the Caspian
58 Feature
60 End of quip
62 Sewing tool
63 Binary
64 To's partner
65 Tom of talk shows
66 Assns.
67 Sure thing!

DOWN
1 Frozen drops
2 Johnson of "Laugh-In"
3 Minute trace
4 Abdul Aziz __ Saud
5 Airplane safety machines
6 Jughead's buddy
7 Iron type
8 Monitor markers
9 Basketry willows
10 Newman movie
11 "Fear of Flying" author Jong
12 Kidney enzyme
13 Grain rot
18 Jack of "Barney Miller"
22 Active pastime
25 Cop's route
26 Entire
27 Rehan and Huxtable
28 Run in the heat?
32 The Velvet Fog
33 Quantity of moonshine
35 Thrill greatly
36 Philosopher Descartes
37 Analogy phrase
39 Radar signals
40 Festive affair
42 Current measuring device
43 Large purse
45 Run rings around
46 Chain mail in the U.K.
48 Wherewithal
49 Mary Kate and Ashley
50 Beyond stringy
51 One-up
52 Holy sister
56 Land measure
57 Lons names
59 Byrnes or Hall
61 Urban RRs

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	P	R	I	T	E	S	■	E	M	E	R	A	L	D
H	E	A	D	I	L	Y	■	P	A	R	O	L	E	E
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K	N	O	T	■	T	E	N	S	■	■	D	I	M	E
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R	E	N	E	■	■	O	D	E	S	■	E	L	S	E
A	V	E	N	G	E	■	S	E	W	N	■	P	I	N
D	I	S	T	U	R	B	■	P	A	U	P	E	R	S
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S	H	A	R	P	E	N	■	D	E	B	A	S	E	R

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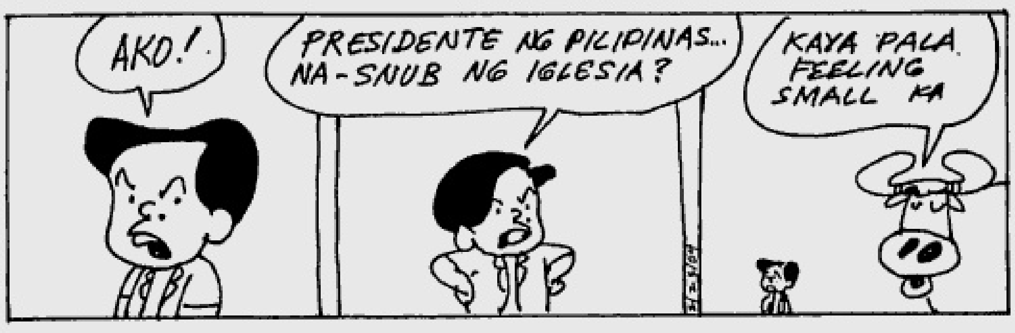
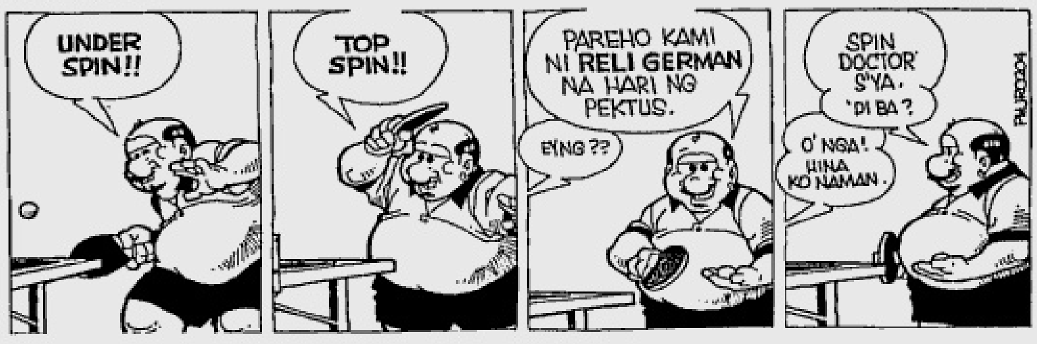
2/23/04

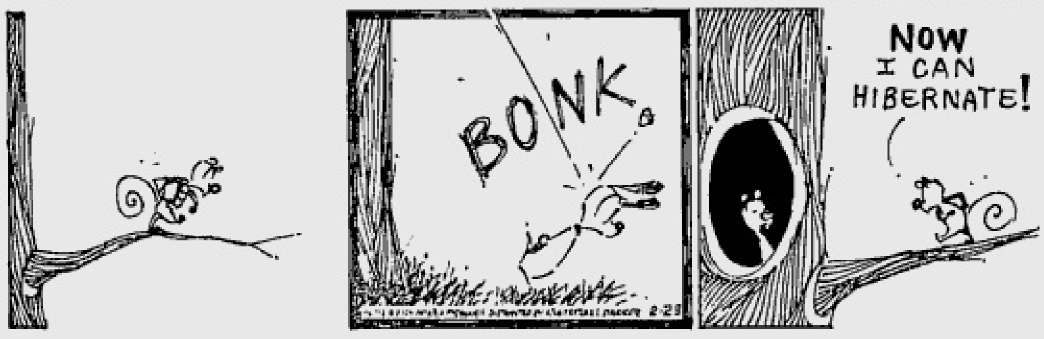
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


AKO!
PRESIDENTE NG PILIPINAS... NA-SNUB NG IGLESIA?
KAYA PALA FEELING SMALL KA

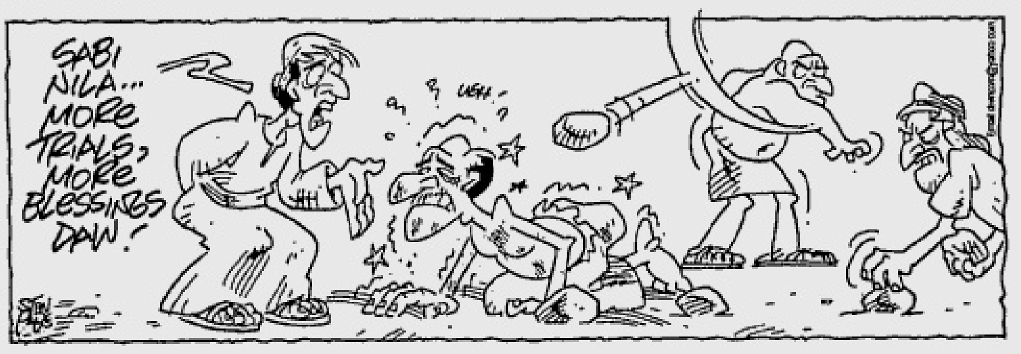
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


UNDER SPIN!!
TOP SPIN!!
PAREHO KAMI NI RELI GERMAN NA HARI NG PEKTUS.
EYNG??
SPIN DOCTOR' S'YA. 'DI BA?
O' NGA! HINA KO NAMAN.
PMJR2004

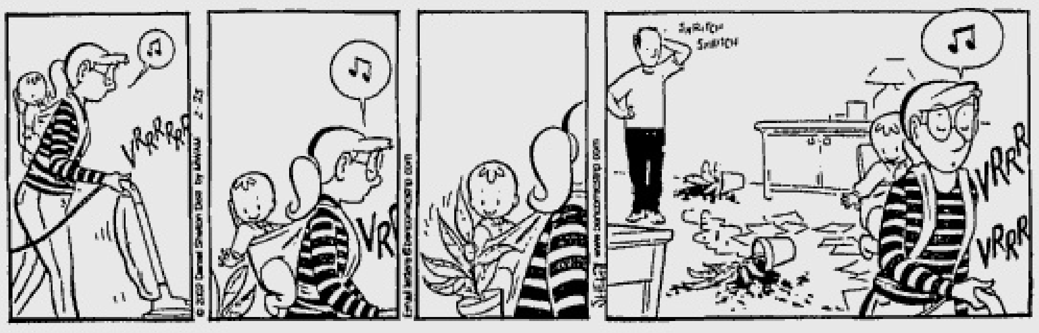
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BONK
2-23
NOW I CAN HIBERNATE!

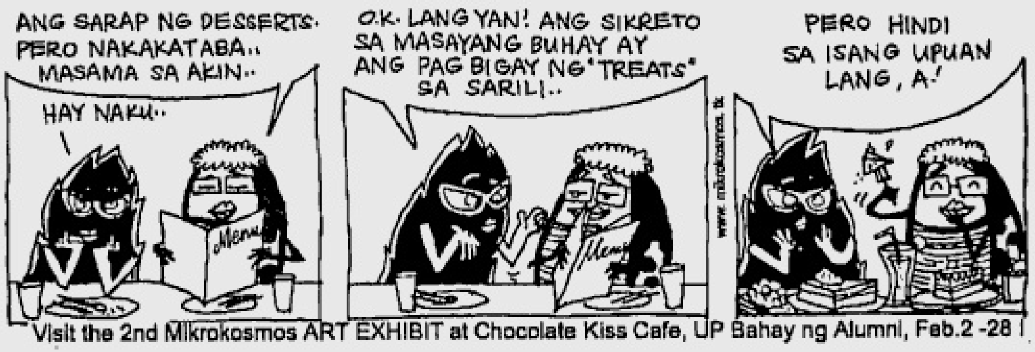
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SABI NILA... MORE TRIALS, MORE BLESSINGS DAW!
UGH...

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

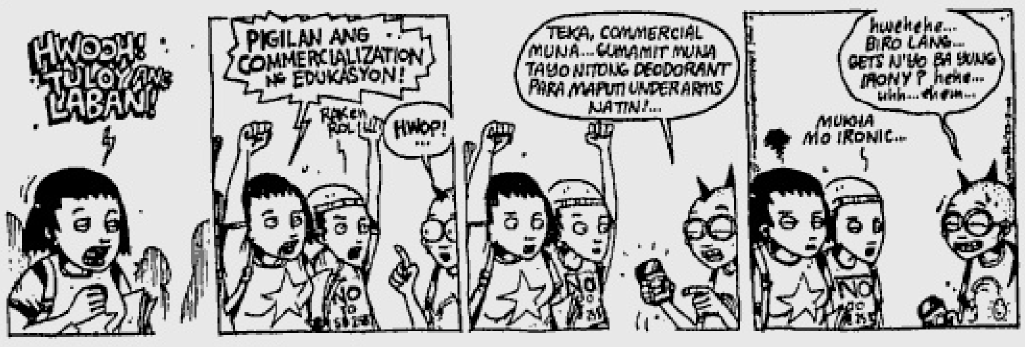

VRRRRR
2-23
VR
SKRITCH SKRITCH
VRRR
VRRR

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

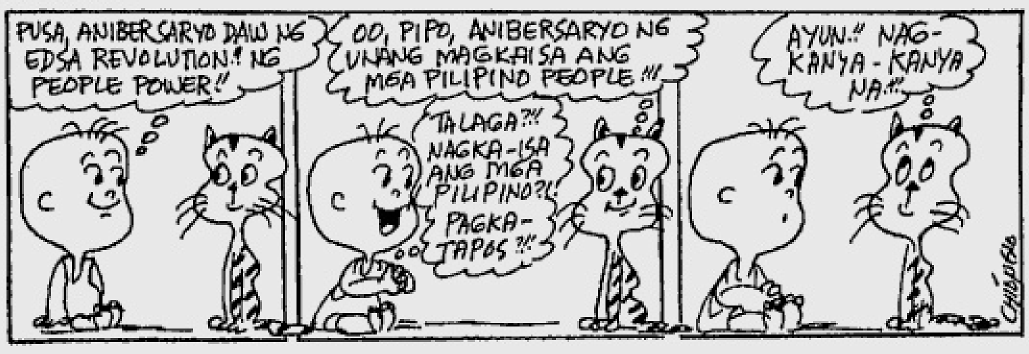

ANG SARAP NG DESSERTS. PERO NAKAKATABA.. MASAMA SA AKIN..
HAY NAKU..
Menu
O.K. LANG YAN! ANG SIKRETO SA MASAYANG BUHAY AY ANG PAG BIGAY NG "TREATS" SA SARILI..
PERO HINDI SA ISANG UPUAN LANG, A!

Visit the 2nd Mikrokosmos ART EXHIBIT at Chocolate Kiss Cafe, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Feb.2 -28

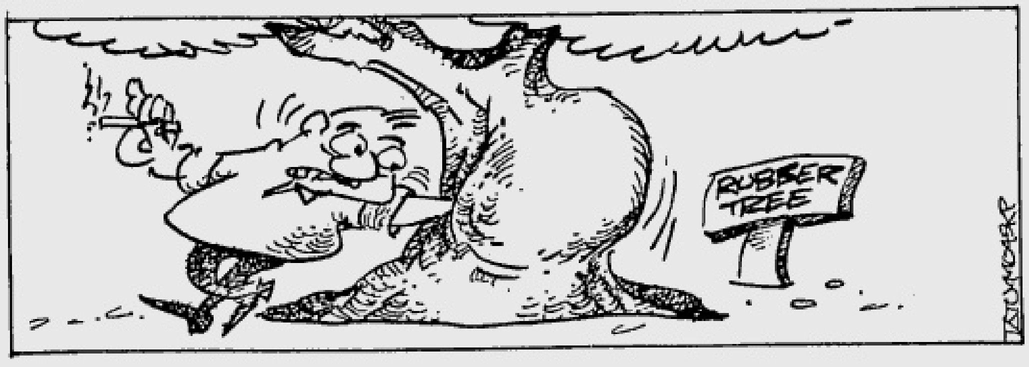
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! TULOY ANG LABAN!
PIGILAN ANG COMMERCIALIZATION NG EDUKASYON!
RAKEN ROL!
HWOP! ...
TEKA, COMMERCIAL MUNA... GUMAMIT MUNA TAYO NITONG DEODORANT PARA MAPUTI UNDERARMS NATIN!...
hwehehe... BIRO LANG... GETS N'YO BA YUNG IRONY? hehe... uhh... ahem...
MUKHA MO IRONIC...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, ANIBERSARYO DAW NG EDSA REVOLUTION! NG PEOPLE POWER!!
OO, PIPO, ANIBERSARYO NG UNANG MAGKAISA ANG MGA PILIPINO PEOPLE!!!
TALAGA?!! NAGKA-ISA ANG MGA PILIPINO?!! PAGKA-TAPOS?!!
AYUN..!! NAG-KANYA-KANYA NA..!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


RUBBER TREE
TATUMOARP

BARREDO in her recent master's class in Manila

AS "Giselle"

IN "Swan Lake"

Maniya Barredo hangs her toe shoes—but not quite

From page E1

almost Chaplinesque in her movements—a most enjoyable sight.

But though playful, she was careful about the smallest details—from the curving of the toes, to the position of specific thigh muscles. She pointed out the connection of bar movements to specific dance steps on the floor. In this way ballet was presented—not as a series of "mindless military" exercises, but as the components of dance combinations that made up a major ballet performance.

We were also breathless when she would demonstrate specific steps, which is something many ballet teachers don't do. Instead they give instructions, using their arms to demonstrate how the legs should work.

It was like an on-the-spot, informal show of excerpts of expertise.

The only time she alluded to herself with "magnitude" was when she made the girls split forwards (facing the mirror), then split sideways (legs extended outwards), then turn the split in the opposite direction (facing Maniya). "Bend your knees," she said, and the girls prettily slid their legs to bend on the floor before gracefully standing up. It was a lovely combination of steps. "You've just learned the Maniya way of getting out of a split," she said, and everyone laughed.

The class went on for two hours, and sensing how the girls were getting tired, Maniya deliberately acted more energized. Ballet is hard work, and without saying a word, she made sure they realized that.

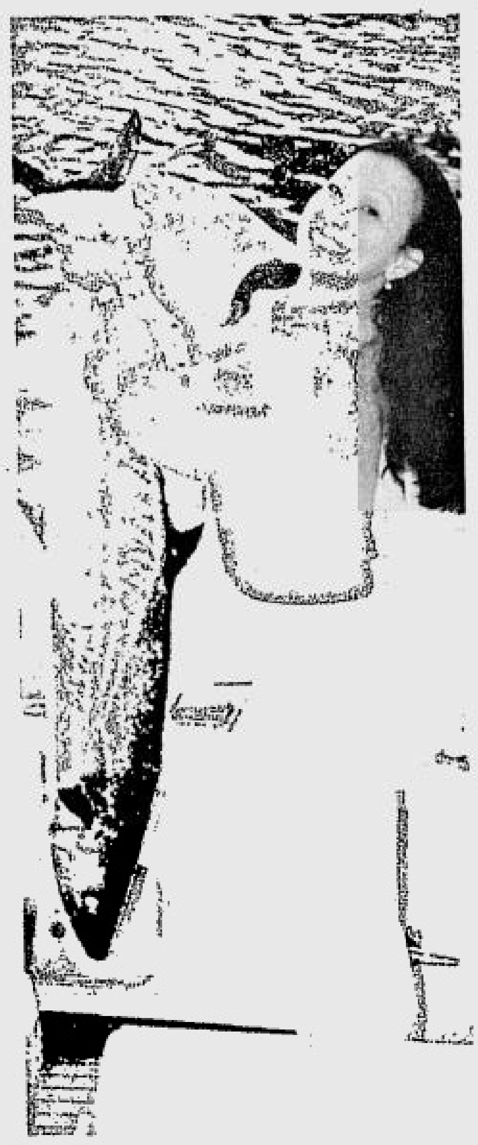
Life in Atlanta

What is Maniya doing these days? She's got her own ballet school, for children aged 13 and up, which she says are important years for good mentorship. Nick Pacana is one of her teachers.

But she believes in giving back what has been given her. She works with physically challenged children—those with autism, Down's syndrome, etc. She also does free performances for senior citizens and terminally ill children.

She also dreams of coming back to the Philippines and have more impact, but "I don't know in what capacity. I would raise the level of what the country needs but in action—do it quietly. Hopefully I can build a pre-professional school not just for dance, but reunite all the different arts."

We are thankful these thoughts are brewing in Maniya's mind, because once an idea enters her mind, she has this knack for acting on it. Essentially Maniya.


ONLY 4'11," she has enough spunk and grace to dance toe to toe with the giants of ballet.

YOU CAN WIN A BORACAY TRIP FOR 4
PLUS 1 MILLION POCKET MONEY
to watch the NESTEA Beach Volley 2004 Finals
JOIN THE
NESTEA
BEACH VOLLEY
MILLION PLUNGE

PROMO MECHANICS:

Prizes:

First Prize	: 1 million pesos and a trip for 4 to Boracay to watch the NESTEA Beach Volley 2004 Finals on April 16-18, 2004
Consolation	: 10 trips for 4 to Boracay 25 SMART Buddy phonekits

Retail
1. Buy NESTEA at your favorite supermarkets, groceries and sari-sari stores.
2. Each refill pack will have 1 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge sticker.
3. Peel off the sticker to reveal the raffle code.
4. Using any SMART Buddy, SMART Gold, Addict Mobile and Talk 'N Text cellphone, text NESTEA<space>rafflecode<space>name/address and send to 29767 (Ex. NESTEA 1234567 Jimbo Bautista/102 Gamboa St., Legaspi Vill., Makati City).
5. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

Schools
1. Buy NESTEA at your school canteen and cafeterias (with promo materials) and get the NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge frequency card.
2. Complete 3 stamps on your frequency cards (1 order of Nestea = 1 stamp) to qualify to join the text-in raffle promo.
3. Scratch the silver portion at the back of the frequency card to reveal the raffle code.
4. Using any SMART Buddy, SMART Gold, Addict Mobile and Talk 'N Text cellphone, text NESTEA<space>raffle code<space>name/address and send to 29767 (Ex. NESTEA 1234567 Jimbo Bautista/102 Gamboa St., Legaspi Vill., Makati City).
5. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

Shakey's Restaurants
1. Each time you order NESTEA together with your favorite meals at Shakey's, you get a scratch card:
   - 1 NESTEA glass = 1 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch card
   - 1 order of Bottomless NESTEA = 2 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch cards
   - 1 order of NESTEA pitcher = 4 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch cards
2. Scratch the silver portion on the card to reveal the raffle code.
3. Using any SMART Buddy, SMART Gold, Addict Mobile and Talk 'N Text cellphone, text NESTEA<space>raffle code<space>name/address and send to 29767 (Ex. NESTEA1234567 Jimbo Bautista/102 Gamboa St., Legaspi Vill., Makati City).
4. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

Participating restaurants in Power Plant Mall, Ayala Malls, Ayala Food Choices, Food Treat at Starmall, Mstar and Metropolis, Dencio's, Cabalen, Bacolod Chicken Inasal, Italianni's, Friday's, Outback and Brothers' Burger
1. For every order of NESTEA at participating restaurants (with promo materials), you can get a scratch card:
   - 1 NESTEA glass = 1 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch card
   - 1 order of Bottomless NESTEA = 2 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch cards
   - 1 order of NESTEA pitcher = 4 NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch cards
2. Scratch the silver portion on the card to reveal the raffle code.
3. Using any SMART Buddy, SMART Gold, Addict Mobile and Talk 'N Text cellphone, text NESTEA<space>raffle code<space>name/address and send to 29767 (Ex. NESTEA 1234567 Jimbo Bautista/102 Gamboa St., Legaspi Vill., Makati City).
4. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

SMART Buddy (Promo Duration: Feb. 28-March 30, 2004)
1. Buy a SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM 2 for only P199 at any SMART Wireless Centers nationwide and get a NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch card for free.
2. Scratch the silver portion on the card to reveal the raffle code.
3. Using a SMART Buddy cellphone, text NESTEA<space>raffle code<space>name/address and send to 29767. (Ex. NESTEA 1234567 Jimbo Bautista/102 Gamboa St., Legazpi Vill., Makati City)
4. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

- Only 1 name can be registered per cellphone number.
- Last day of texting entries will be on March 30, 2004.
- Participants will automatically receive a text message confirming receipt of the raffle entry. Winners will be drawn using electronic raffle draw.
- Draw date is on March 31, 2004, 2 pm at Information Gateway, Inc. office at 1401 West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas.
- Winners will be notified via phone call from a special number and registered mail.
- A participant can win only once. If a name wins more than once, he gets the bigger prize.
- Winners need to present the registered mail, SMART SIM card together with valid ID and the winning sticker and the NESTEA refill pack or frequency card with 3 NESTEA logo stamps or scratch card to claim their prize at the NESTLÉ office, 31 Plaza Drive Rockwell Center, Makati. For provincial winners, prizes may be claimed at the nearest NESTLÉ office specified in the registered notice.
- If the winner comes from the school category, they must present the winning scratch card with complete and valid NESTEA logo stamps. Only completely stamped and validated scratch cards will be honored.
- Trip to Boracay prizes should be confirmed on or before April 11, 2004. The 1 Million pesos and cellphone prizes may be claimed within 60 days from notification.
- Trips are transferable but not convertible to cash.
- Trips to Boracay are only valid from April 16-18 during the NESTEA Beach Volley 2004 Finals.
- Employees of NESTLÉ Philippines, Publicis Manila, SMART Communications, Inc., Information Gateway, Inc., TOPBEST Printing Corp., Transprint, ZenithOptimedia, Rapp Collins, NEXT, Spike, Ace, Spark, all participating groceries, supermarket, schools, restaurants including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
- NESTLÉ PHILIPPINES shall shoulder the 20% tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.00.
- Promo period is from Feb. 1 to March 30, 2004.

For more info Text NESTEA to 29767

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Love in the time of diaspora

By Gibbs Cadiz

THE SURPRISING discovery that audiences will make about "Milan" is that it is more than just a love story.

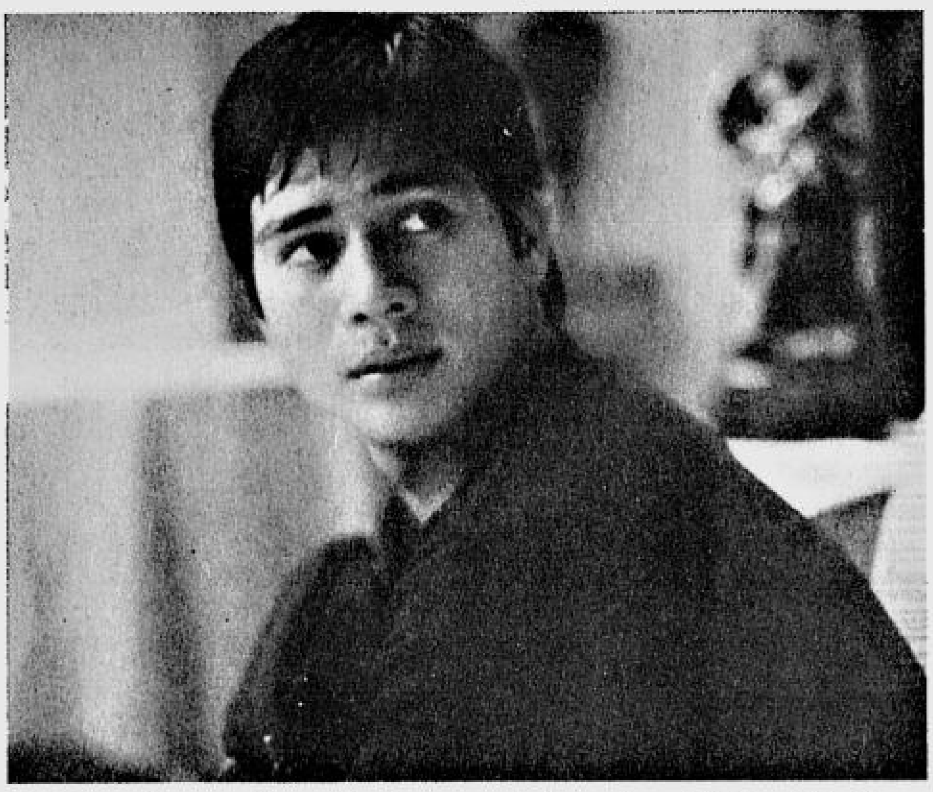
It is about boy and girl falling in love, all right, but it locates its emotional moorings in a phenomenon closer to our daily lives as a nation in diaspora: the frayed, complex, yet resilient bonds among OFWs and the families they leave behind.

Director Olivia Lamasan had been to this territory before. In "Sana Maulit Muli," she had Aga Muhlach high-tailing it to America in pursuit of a girlfriend (Lea Salonga) who had grown to love the idea of self-reliance in a foreign land.

But in America, Muhlach's character would find, not the material and psychic bliss many Filipinos often fantasize about, but days and nights of backbreaking work and the kind of bland, everyday oppression doled out by Yanks and fellow Pinoy immigrants alike.

Earning your keep in a country not your own, the movie made clear, entailed spilling guts. It scars you in many ways.

You begin to see the burdensome life you left behind in a new light. You compromise, you trim your expectations, you learn to haggle with hard circumstances. And you bear with the deep, dank loneliness.



PIOLO Pascual is outstanding as Lino, who journeys to Europe in search of a long-lost wife.

Olivia Lamasan's 'Milan' shows that there are many more unique stories about OFWs waiting to be told

Unknown

Piolo Pascual plays Lino, a character similar to Muhlach's, in "Milan." But this time, he's in a foreign country in search of a wife (Iza Calzado) who has long since stopped communicating, her last whereabouts unknown.

REVIEW

In Milan, he is helped by a small community of Pinoys, many of them undocumented travelers like him who illegally crossed the Swiss border into Italy. Everyone in this group is engaged in multiple jobs, from cleaning lavatories to picking grapes in vineyards. Everyone is a slave to the euro.

The most enterprising of them is Jenny (Claudine Barretto), a woman who has buried a messy family life in grinding work and a cold, hard-nosed approach to survival.

"*Nag*-GRO *pa nga ako dati*," she tells Lino, in a scene of coiled heartbreak. "*Nag*-model-model *sa mga* clubs. *Kung manipis ang* wallet, no touch. *Pero kung mayaman*, touch-touch!"

The dialogue may sound cliché, the situation moldy. But Lamasan films it with respectful restraint, and Barretto so leavens her line reading with humor, resignation and vulnerability, that the scene acquires a whale of a wallop.

The rest of the film is a similar exercise in exquisite balance. Every now and then you get the fear that the story will slide irretrievably into cutesy artifice, only for Lamasan to pull back with a throwaway line, a timely cutaway, or a sublime acting moment (such as Pascual suddenly gushing forth tears after whirling like a dervish while making a wish for his absent wife).

"Milan" shows there are many more unique stories about OFWs waiting to be told. The screenplay (by Raymond Lee and Lamasan) sidesteps dreary stereotypes.

Here, the supporting characters all seem fresh: a loud but sweet-loving lesbian and her lover, a man and a woman who both have families at home but settle for the comfort of togetherness to ward off the lonely nights.

PASCUAL and Claudine Barretto in a scene from the movie

Grounding their stories is a series of intercutting interviews with real OFWs in the city. As these ordinary men and women calmly talk of the extraordinary sacrifices they go through, the drama is particularized, wondrously validated. Cinema acquires the heft of *verité*.

Compelling

At over two hours, the film is flabby and self-indulgent. The first two-thirds of the movie is compelling, the last part less so.

What holds it together is the strong acting. Pascual, in particular, is outstanding. His triumph is in playing an essentially weak character, a rootless guy who finds anchor only in strong women, as a figure that inspires enormous sympathy.

There is much more than good looks at work here. No doubt that if people were asked to pick Pascual's acting highlight in this movie, they'd pick that photogenic moment where he sheds spontaneous tears.

But we believe there's an even better scene that demonstrates how good an actor he is.

Near the end of the film, Pascual's character himself is interviewed, like other OFWs before him. And as he responds to the off-cam questions, you realize that his demeanor has ever-so-subtly changed.

His voice has become flatter, his movements more guarded. He has become conscious of the camera. We all react the same way in front of an intrusive lens, don't we? That Pascual manages. to work in that tiny shift shows his complete mastery of his role.

This leads us to our major quibble with the film. It could have ended with this scene, with Lino looking wistfully away, then at the off-cam speaker and softly saying, *"Hahanapin ko* si Jenny. *Hahanapin ko siya..."*

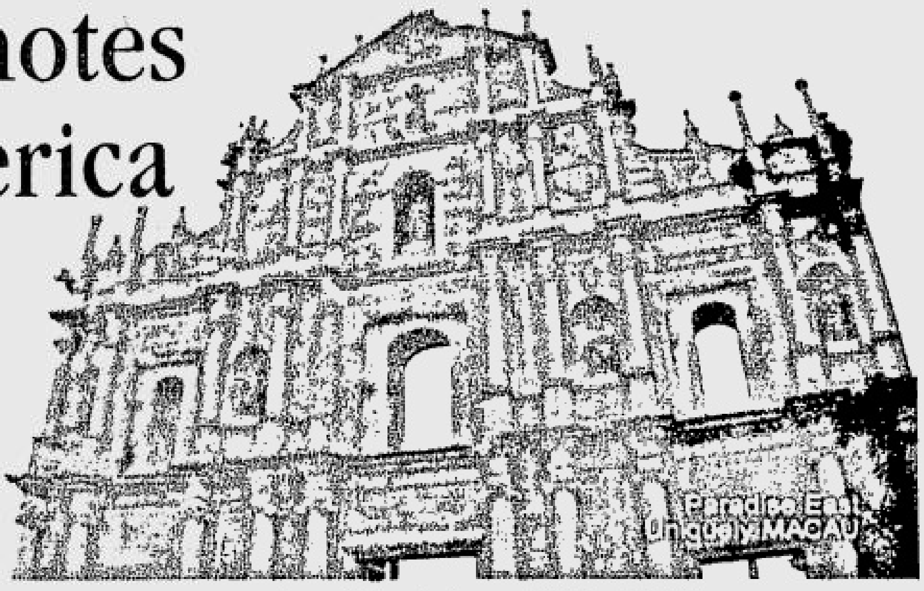
Think of how distinctive that would be for a Filipino film—the promise of love as an open-ended enterprise of patience and loyalty.

Instead, we get the requisite wrap-up of the lovers reconciling against a grand backdrop—this time on the dove-strewn courtyard of the Piazza di San Marco in Venice.

It's too conventional an ending for a movie that, for two-thirds of its length at least, tries hard to be anything but.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

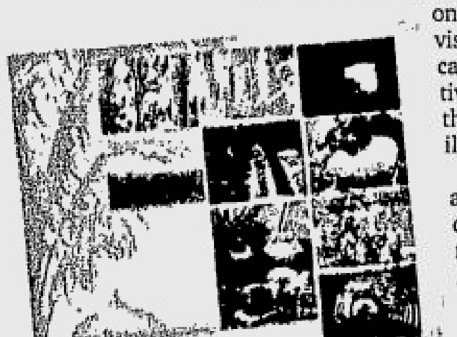
Filipino cable channel promotes Asian cultures in North America



THE FORMER Portuguese colony of Macau is featured in "Travel Asia."

By Ed Santoalla
Contributor

FILIPINOS in the United States and Canada thirsty for positive news from the Philippines now have a chance to view Isla, the first and only channel on local television dedicated to broadcasting advocacy initiatives of the government, the private sector and civil society organizations.

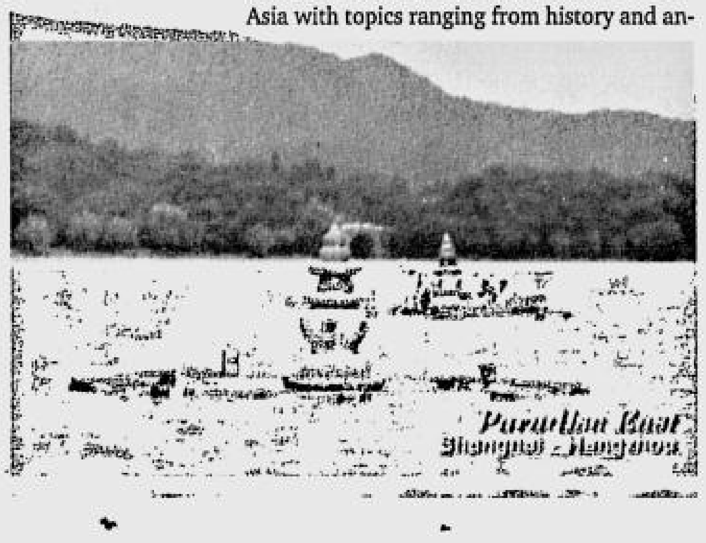


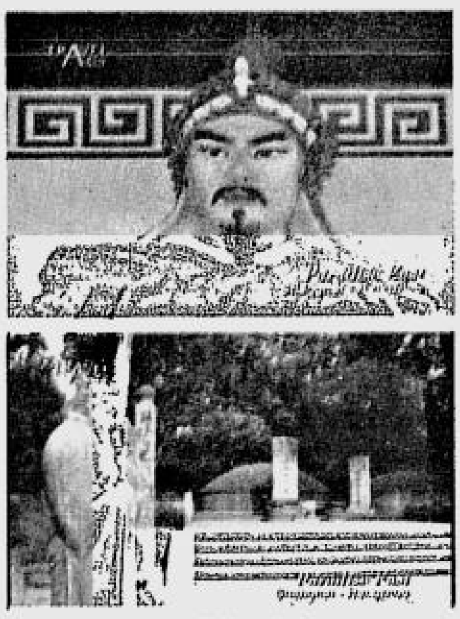
Starting immediately after the Christmas holidays, advocacy stories now airing on Isla the Advocacy Channel will be part of Living Asia Channel, a new channel on Globecast World TV, satellite TV service catering to Asians and Western Europeans in North America.

Living Asia Channel is World TV's first Asian lifestyle and travel channel targeting the biggest global markets—Asians.

According to Carlos G. Abrera, chairman of CCI Asia Television Inc. (CATV), US-based subsidiary of CCI Asia Group Corp., Living Asia Channel will be a 24-hour English language channel specifically targeting second and third generation Filipinos, Asians and other North American audiences interested in Asian travel and lifestyle. Proudly Philippine-made, it will feature programs showcasing the best of Asian destinations, finds, culture, cuisine, fashion, people and issues, which will be carried under the following program categories:

- Travel Asia features popular destinations, exotic places, festivals, bed, dine and shopping options and gives all the valuable tips and information any traveler to Asia will need to get the best Asia has to offer. This will also showcase the different rich cultures across Asia with topics ranging from history and ancient rites to the latest in hi-tech gadgets and great bargains. The blend of the ancient and the modern add to the exciting world that is Asia.





DIFFERENT faces of Shanghai

Another side of Asia

- Young Asia is a contradiction in terms to those who still look at Asia as the oldest continent steeped in ancient beliefs and customs. But another side of Asia is emerging as it takes its place in the global community as the biggest and most important market today. And it is the young Asians who will dictate the trends, the lifestyle, and the role the region will take in the new century.
- Advocacy Asia spreads positive developmental news and tackles issues geared toward empowering people and communities serving as a tool for governments and society to work together to attain progress and advance nation-building. Advocacy stories now airing on Isla will form part of this program.
- Trade Asia features the innate business sense of Asians, their innovations and unique way of doing business. It provides insights on how to do business in and with Asians.
- Classified Asia offers opportunities in business, investments and trade in the region as it links the viewers to its website and call-center partner for more information.

"Being a Philippine-based channel, the initial market of Living Asia will be Filipinos, both local and overseas," said Abrera. For sponsors targeting the overseas Filipinos, the North American exposure, with about 600,000 Filipino homes, will be attractive as it focuses on the exact market they want to reach."

Isla, another product of CCI Asia Television, is currently carried by several Philippine cable operators with over a million subscribers from Mindanao, Cebu, Palawan and Northern Luzon and is shown by free-to-air UHF and VHF channels that have 95-percent penetration in the mega Manila area. Living Asia Channel is expected to have the same footprint locally. Sponsors requiring local exposure will therefore get good value for their ad placements with the international coverage as a bonus expanded market.

"With our success in producing programs with popular and relevant content from Lakbay TV to Isla and Juice, and with the global satellite uplink and distribution infrastructure now available to our company, CCI Asia Television is confident that the Living Asia Channel will be received as well as Isla," Carl L. Magno, CCI Asia Television president, said.

"Some Living Asia programs are now shown as 30-minute segments in Isla before it is launched as a full channel in early 2004. The line-up of programs will cater to target audiences with ages ranging from 18 to 45 years old," he added:

Access

CCI Asia Television will make use of the infrastructure facilities of France Telecom subsidiary GlobeCast Asia Pte Ltd and PLDT subsidiary Mabuhay Satellite Corp., owner of the Agila II satellite (located at 146 E.L. orbital slot), to ensure the successful distribution of the Living Asia Channel in its target coverage areas.

TRAVEL Asia
SHANGHAI
nightscape

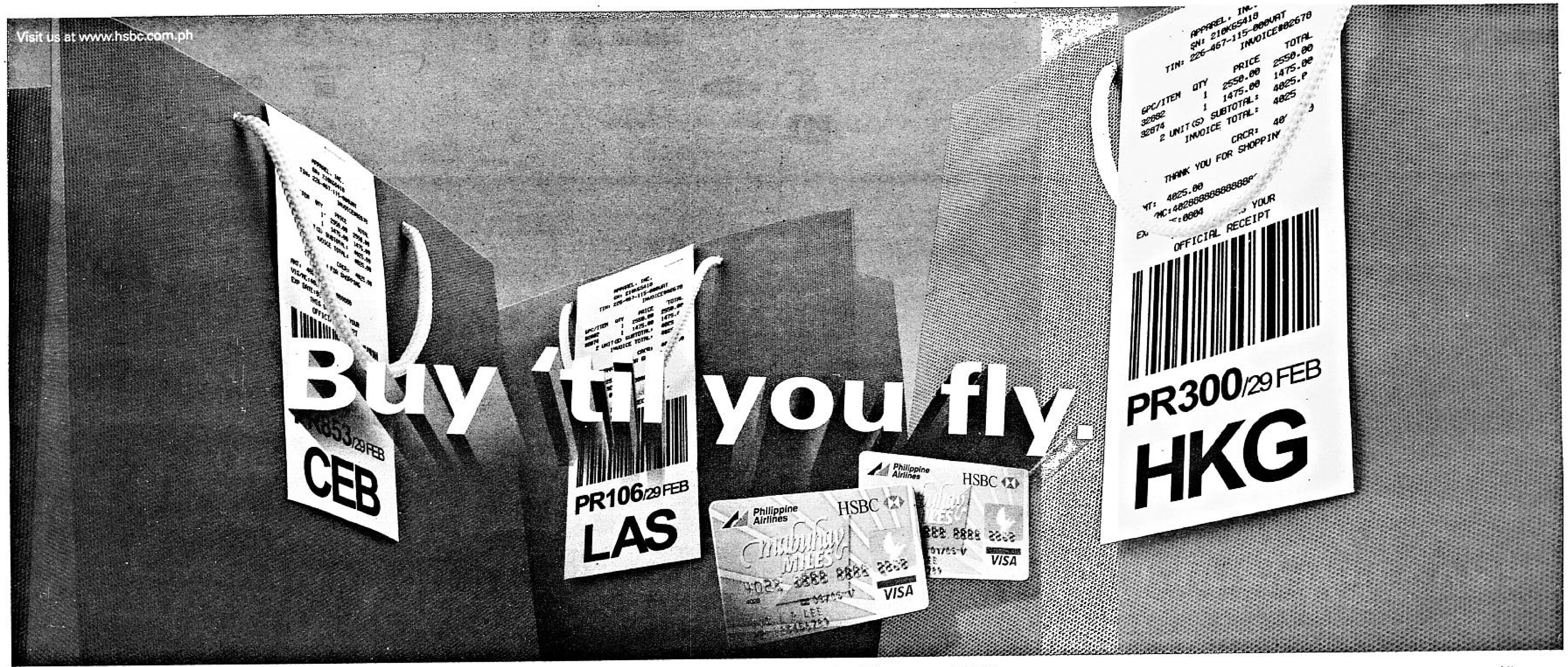
Upon launch, Living Asia will be seen in the US, including Hawaii, and Canada through the GlobeCast WorldTV Direct-to-Home (DTH) platform using the Telstar 5 satellite, which is available to some three-million viewers, 200,000 of whom are Filipinos. However, anyone with an ordinary DTH antenna and box tuned to Telstar 5 satellite will be able to receive Living Asia Channel free of charge according to Magno.

Abrera added that "being free-to-air on Telstar 5, the Living Asia Channel's natural market will include all GlobeCast WorldTV viewers and those with a DTH box and antenna aimed at Telstar 5."

In most parts of Asia, anyone or any cable/DTH operator can receive Living Asia Channel free of charge using a C-band antenna tuned to the Agila II satellite of Mabuhay Satellite Corp., Magno said.

Mabuhay will uplink the channel's signal from the Philippines and distribute it throughout its Agila II footprint in Asia.

Contact George L. Magno, managing director, CCI Asia Television, 321 South Prospect Ave., Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621 USA; e-mail george@imagesasia.net. In Asia, contact Ludette Rosales, regional director, CCI Asia Television, 4/F Caresma Bldg., 50 Polaris St., Bel-Air, Makati City, Philippines; e-mail cciasiagroup@yahoo.com or ludettequerubin@yahoo.com.



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Shop away at select partner merchants of HSBC and earn more Miles: Mabuhay Miles Visa Classic lets you earn 2 free Miles for every P45 you charge while the new Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold lets you earn 3 free Miles for every P45 card spend. And everywhere else you use the card, you get one free Mile for every P45 you charge. No doubt the more you shop, the sooner you'll fly free.

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Pile up the Miles faster
And now, the journey to free flights just got faster with the **Extra Mile** program, an exclusive from Mabuhay Miles Visa. With this one-of-a-kind offer, you can now double or even triple your Miles by simply using your card at select establishments. For Mabuhay Miles Visa Classic, the conversion rate is 2 free Miles for every P45 card spend; and with the new Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold, you get 3 free Miles for every P45 you charge. And there are over 60 establishments around town where you can pile up the extra Miles!

Earn Miles wherever you spend
Whether you're answering a craving at your favorite restaurant or purchasing practical appliances and home fixtures, the bill you settle today with your Mabuhay Miles Visa will be your ticket to that free trip tomorrow.

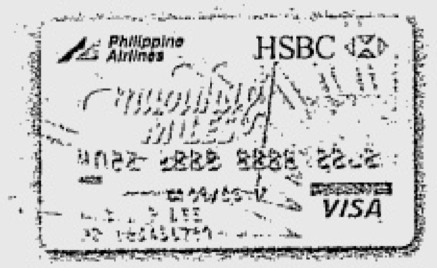
Remember, the more you use your card, the faster you'll earn those Miles so you can fly for free.

Mabuhay Miles Visa lets you enjoy these other benefits:

- Acceptance in more than 32 million establishments here and abroad
- HSBC's Instalment Plan – pay as low as 5% of your monthly instalment amount
- 24/7 online access of your Statement of Account
- 24-hour customer service
- Emergency Cash Advance
- Billings in Pesos
- Flexible Repayment Option
- Credit Card Account Access via internet or text
- Free Travel Accident Insurance up to P3,000,000
- Over 1,000 Payment Centers nationwide
- Credit Life Protection

Promo period is from 24 February 2004 to 31 January 2005. See flyers for more details.

Introducing the Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold



The latest card offering from HSBC packs in more value in your purchases. Get to enjoy:

- a higher credit limit
- one of the lowest finance charge in the market
- complimentary Mabuhay Miles Elite membership on the first year

Plus, earn free Miles faster with the exclusive program called **Extra Mile**. Shop and charge using this card at partner establishments and you can **triple your Miles** faster so you can travel sooner.

Call 878-7878 to apply!

Get a Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold today and receive 1,000 Bonus Miles upon first use of your card.

For calls outside Metro Manila but within the Philippines, call our domestic toll-free no. 1-800-1-888-8555

You may also visit any HSBC or HSBC Savings Bank branch or apply online at www.hsbc.com.ph

Application Requirements
To be eligible you must:

- be between 21 to 65 years old
- have a minimum gross annual income of
  - P120,000 (for Mabuhay Miles Visa Classic)
  - P2,000,000 (for Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold)
- be employed and/or practicing a profession for at least 2 years or own a business that has been existing for at least 3 years
- be residing or employed within Metro Manila, Rizal, Bulacan, Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, Pampanga, Olongapo, Subic, Metro Cebu or Davao City
- have a residential landline telephone

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0403. Series of 2004.

Mabuhay Miles
EXTRA MILE
FREE MILES FASTER

Double or Triple your Miles at these establishments:

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MACO
MakeRoom
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Tomlinson
True Value

Beauty/Cosmetics/Leisure
Beauty bar
Discovery

Dining
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Asiatica
Buko
Conway's
Garden
Patio
GOURMET
Inagiku
Island Cafe
Italianni's
L'Opera
Lobby Lounge
MyLK
nishiki
OUTBACK
paparazzi
people's palace
Jatpur
red
SUGI
Friday's
Horizon Lounge

Fashion
AX
ANNE KLEIN
BALLY
Bass
BOTTEGA VENETA
BURBERRY
CK
Calvin Klein
CHARRIOL
COACH
colour eighteen
Dexter
DIESEL
DKNY
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Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort Cebu, Philippines
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TOBY'S

Plaridel media award launched

THE UP College of Mass Communication announces the establishment of an annual award called UP Gawad Plaridel to recognize Filipino media practitioners who have excelled in any of the media (print, radio, film, television, and new media) and have performed with the highest level of professional integrity in the interest of public service. For this year, the award will be given to an outstanding practitioner in print media.

The award is named after Marcelo H. del Pilar (nom de plume, Plaridel), the selfless propagandist whose stewardship of the reformist newspaper La Solidaridad helped crystallize nationalist sentiments and ignite libertarian ideas in the 1890s. Like Plaridel, the awardee must believe in the vision of a Philippine society that is egalitarian, participative and progressive, and media that are socially responsible, critical and vigilant, liberative and transformative, and free and independent.

Eligible for the awards are all living Filipino individuals who have excelled in print media, such as editors, publishers, reporters, columnists, editorial cartoonists, photojournalists, etc. Aside from their probity and integrity, these media practitioners must have produced a body of work that is marked by excellence and social relevance and recognized by national and international awards.

Only nominations by institutions will be accepted for the award. These institutions may include media corporations, professional media associations, media advocacy groups, educational institutions, cultural foundations and NGOs. All current full-time faculty and staff of the UP College of Mass Communication are disqualified from the nomination.

Deadline for the nominations is March 22. The first screening will be done by April 6 and the final selection on May 6. The recipient of the first UP Gawad Plaridel will be known by June 19.

The UP Gawad Plaridel will be given every July 4 in commemoration of Del Pilar's death anniversary. The awardee will receive the UP Gawad Plaridel trophy (designed by National Artist Napoleon Abueva) and a cash award of P100,000, and will deliver a lecture called the Plaridel Lecture, which will address an issue relevant to the state and practice of Philippine media.

U.P. GAWAD PLARIDEL
JUAN DELA CRUZ
U.P. College of Mass Communication
Award in
Outstanding Media Practitioners
2004

TROPHY designed by National Artist Napoleon Abueva

Join!
Search for
Miss Silka 2004

MECHANICS:

1. All natural born females residing in the Philippines between 18 - 24 years old meeting the criteria below are invited to join the search for Miss Silka 2004:
   - fair complexion
   - at least 5'3" in height
   - with pleasing personality of good moral character
   - College level or College graduate

*PROMO STARTS DECEMBER 1, 2003 UNTIL MARCH 31, 2004

2. Entries have to be mailed with the following requirements enclosed:
   - one (1) label or empty box carton of any Silka product
   - Bio-data including name, address, contact number and signature
   - Vital statistics including height and weight
   - 3R size close-up colored picture
   - 4R size full-body colored picture
3. Entries have to be mailed to the following address:

Search for Miss Silka 2004
c/o PBS ADVERTISING
Dolmar Building, 1122 Perez Street,
cor. U.N. Avenue, Paco Manila

4. Selection Process:
   - There will be four (4) qualification rounds held before the day of Miss Silka 2004 Pageant.
   - For each qualification round, twenty (20) candidates will be interviewed. Three (3) will be chosen as finalists for each round – for a total of twelve (12) finalists to compete for the title of Miss Silka 2004 on the day of the pageant.
   - Selected candidates and finalists will be notified through registered mail. For those residing in remote areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, 2-way transportation fare and 1 night hotel accommodation will be provided for the participant and 1 companion.

Schedule of Events:

Event	Event Date	Last Day for Entry Submission
Qualification round # 1	January 10, 2004	December 31, 2003
Qualification round # 2	February 7, 2004	January 31, 2004
Qualification round # 3	March 6, 2004	February 29, 2004
Qualification round # 4	April 3, 2004	March 31, 2004
Miss Silka Pageant 2004	April 24, 2004	

*Only one entry per participant will be acknowledged throughout the duration of the search.
*All Silka employees, distributors, retailers and advertising agencies, including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded.

5. Awards:

Miss Silka 2004 winner
- Php 100,000
- one (1) year exclusive contract with Cosmetique Asia, promoting all Silka products through mall tours, TV guesting and other PR activities
- an exclusive date with TV Star and Silka Endorser John Lloyd Cruz

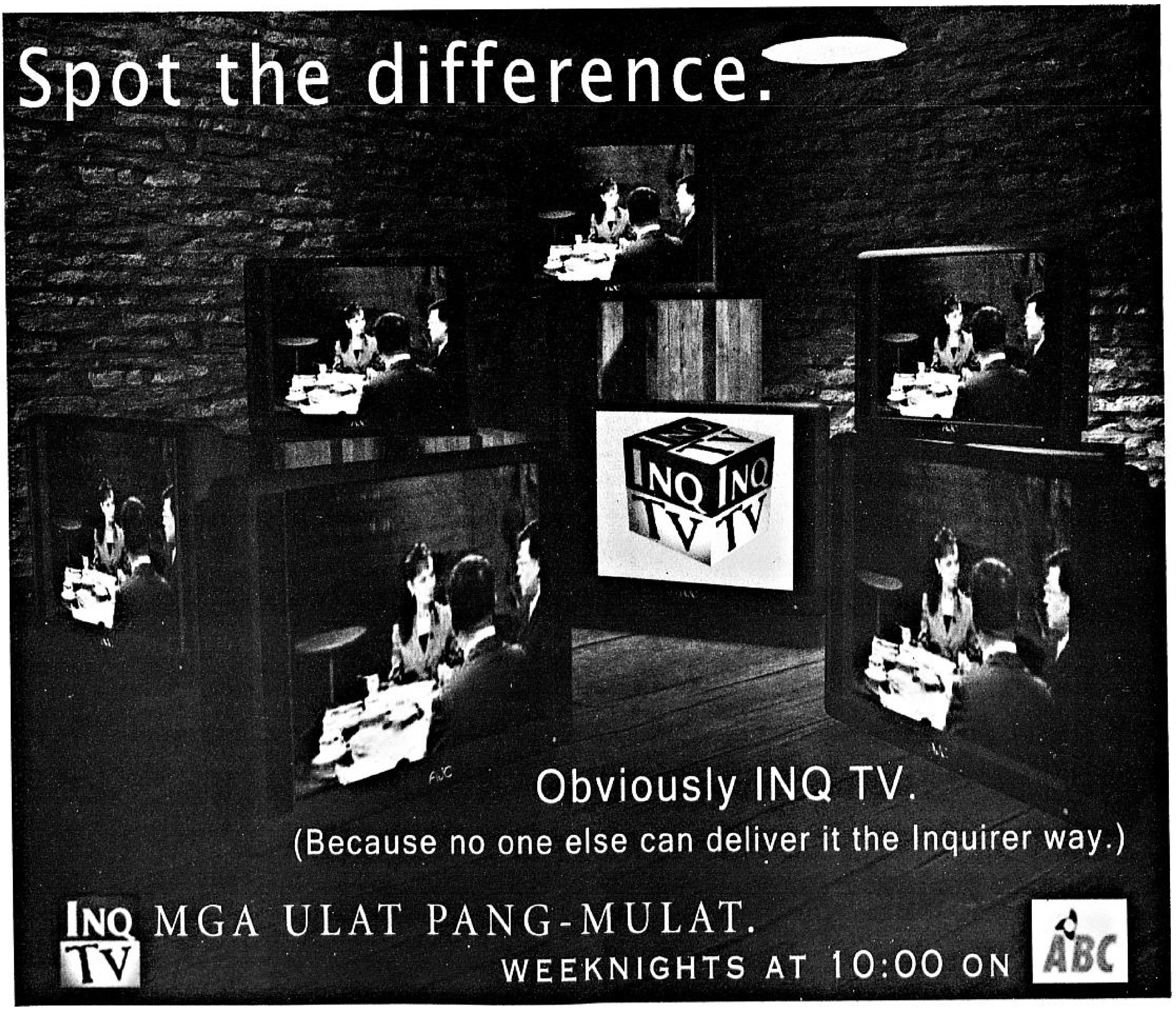
1st runner up
- Php 50,000
- Silka gift pack

2nd runner up
- Php 30,000
- Silka gift pack

12 finalists chosen during the elimination rounds
- Php 5,000
- Silka gift pack

Candidates interviewed
- Silka gift pack

PER DOH-BFAD Permit #1041 s. 2003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(Because no one else can deliver it the Inquirer way.)
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WEEKNIGHTS AT 10:00 ON
ABC

She's come full circle

Four years after her Singapore TV debut, broadcast journalist Jennifer Alejandro is back in the morning business program circuit as one of Asia's favorite anchors

ONE-WOMAN TEAM. She scans the news, identifies the bulls and bears, and reports them.

By James P. Ong
Contributor

SHE used to be the one of the most awaited faces in the country's primetime television news program, but since 2000, broadcast journalist Jennifer Alejandro has been making her mark in Singapore as one of the more authoritative business anchors on Channel News Asia (Channel 53 on SkyCable and Channel 39 on Home Cable).

These days she can be seen on "Prime Time Morning," the cable's flagship morning program—the reformatted version of "Business Breakfast," which was her first show on CNA. She's on-air by 6:30 a.m. for the "Early Edition" segment, then back every hour or half-hour for continuous updates.

"It's like coming full circle—but different," she explains. "This time around, I'm in full command of myself as a journalist and what defines me as a person. I'm sharper and wiser as a producer, and as an anchor, I 'own' my stories."

No production assistants or researchers for this hardworking achiever. It's a one-woman team. As early as three in the morning, she's in the newsroom scanning the wires for news that happened late in the night and early morning.

By the time the stock market opens in key Asian cities, she's already glued to the computer monitoring the bulls and the bears. To top it all, she also does her own hair and makeup for the cameras. "My day ends at 11:30 a.m., unless I have to go out and do some field reporting—then it's longer."

Pinoy creativity

Has being Pinoy played a crucial part in her success? "Being a success in any profession is not about nationality, it's about loving what you do, working hard for it and being prepared to make sacrifices for it," she explains.

"There's nothing more fulfilling than being able to do what you believe you were born to do. I guess the Pinoy part comes in, in the sense that Filipinos by nature are creative and resourceful. *Ika nga, maabilidad.* Those qualities have helped me in several situations especially when I'm out for reporting duties," she adds.

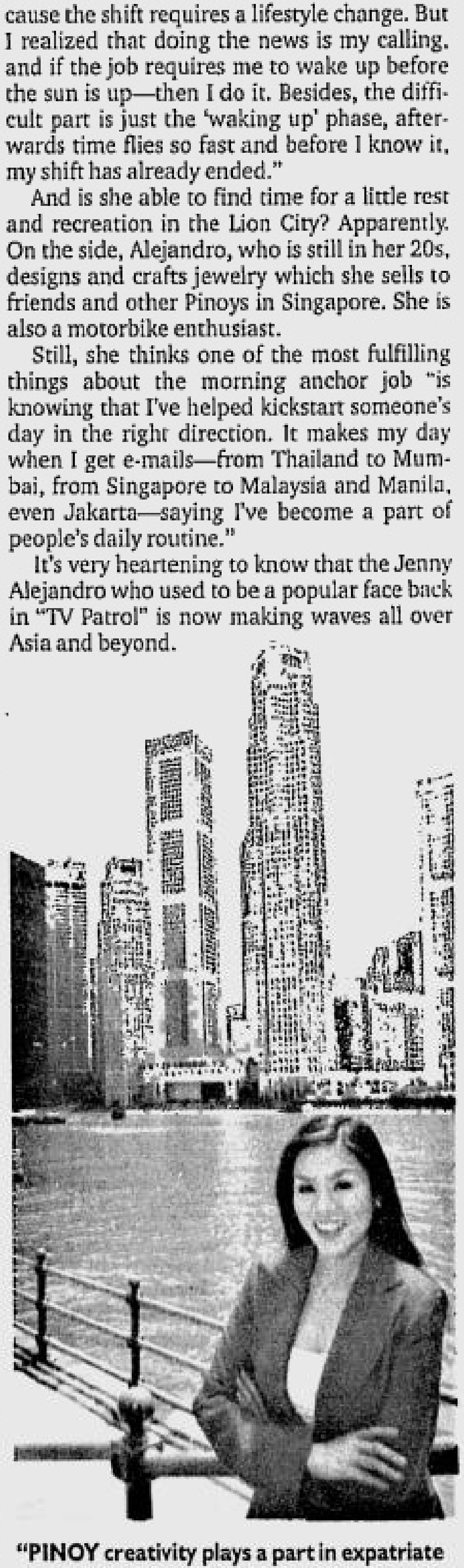
The best thing about her job, says Alejandro, "is having the opportunity to experience the news first hand. I've met people, been to places and have been part of events that would not have been possible if I had not been a journalist." These include the CEOs of Microsoft, Yahoo!, Standard and Poor's, HSBC, Standard Chartered, JP Morgan and Citigroup.

The worst part? Waking up at an ungodly hour. "When 'Prime Time Morning' was offered to me, I had to think twice about it because the shift requires a lifestyle change. But I realized that doing the news is my calling, and if the job requires me to wake up before the sun is up—then I do it. Besides, the difficult part is just the 'waking up' phase, afterwards time flies so fast and before I know it, my shift has already ended."

And is she able to find time for a little rest and recreation in the Lion City? Apparently. On the side, Alejandro, who is still in her 20s, designs and crafts jewelry which she sells to friends and other Pinoys in Singapore. She is also a motorbike enthusiast.

Still, she thinks one of the most fulfilling things about the morning anchor job "is knowing that I've helped kickstart someone's day in the right direction. It makes my day when I get e-mails—from Thailand to Mumbai, from Singapore to Malaysia and Manila, even Jakarta—saying I've become a part of people's daily routine."

It's very heartening to know that the Jenny Alejandro who used to be a popular face back in "TV Patrol" is now making waves all over Asia and beyond.



"PINOY creativity plays a part in expatriate success," Alejandro says.

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1.0 HP MANUAL	13,499	12,999
STANDARD MODELS		
1.0 HP MANUAL	14,799	13,999
1.0 HP TIMER	15,899	14,999
1.0 HP REMOCON	16,899	15,999
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Promo is from February 15-March 31, 2004.
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